A Parson in Mufti

by

The Rev. Canon Wilkinson.

St. Mary's, Aberdeen.

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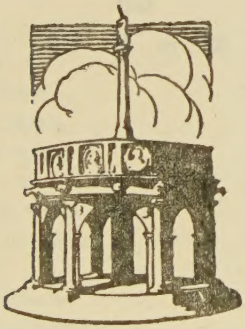
BY

The Rev. Canon Wilkinson

It would be a pity to die and leave no laughter and singing behind us.—Professor Walter Raleigh.



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To
M. S. M. W.

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BY WAY OF PREFACE.

WHEN a clergyman exchanges his two-inch "Cuddesdon" for a soft collar and tie, gets rid of the funereal black which (being in flat contradiction to the joy and graciousness of his Message) is the most pernicious heresy in history, and emerges from the cloisters into the sunshine in plus-fours and thick-soled boots of a cheerful countenance, he is not "disguising" himself for the purpose of living a life of unfettered dissipation, but is merely trying for once to get over the wall that tailors and cutters from time immemorial have set up between his calling and the trade or profession of nearly every other man in the world.

In any case, Mr. Pecksniff may take my word for it that "disguise" is impossible. The parson can no more delude the public into believing that he is other than he is than he can elude himself. The hall-mark of the kirk is written all over him. Consciously or

unconsciously, he is for ever "pulpiteering"; and even if he be merely ordering a cup of coffee in a bun shop, you can detect, above the clatter of the tea cups and the babel of tongues, the distant roll of the "drum ecclesiastic."

So why hedge? I am a parson. I cannot hide the fact, nor do I want to. Besides, I am not ashamed of the faith which expresses itself in this book, neither am I prepared to lick the dust for the form of its expression. It is a firmly rooted faith—a rather jolly faith, I think—in human nature as the finest thing God has made; and as for the form, it is my own, warts and all. Grace, beauty, witchery, and charm are all part of the texture of our nature; and man's infinite capacity for suffering is balanced by his infinite capacity for joy. Wherefore, we shall weep with them that weep and rejoice with them that rejoice, see the fun of life and its splendour, and give the Pharisees and charlatans (dull dogs!) a dunt in the passing.

If I hurt any one's feelings in these pages, I shall be sorry; but not very sorry.

People's over-sensitive (and selfish) preoccupation with their "feelings" has inflicted greater harm upon the Church and done more to embitter human relations and engender unhappiness than almost anything else I can think of; and although it is not explicitly mentioned in the Decalogue, it has all the attributes of a positive sin.

To the nice people who acted as "eyes to the blind" by reading the proof-sheets of these chapters, I say "Thank you!" with deep sincerity.

J. W.

"Sir Peter Pan."

Sir Peter Pan.

IT is commonly supposed, even by educated people, that "Peter Pan" was written by Sir James Barrie. This is a mistake sedulously fostered by mechanically minded persons who do not know the difference between a fairy and a grasshopper. Those of us who have danced with the ostrich to Slighty's tootling and have sipped ambrosia with Wendy out of the buttercups in Never-Never Land know better. "James Barrie" was written by Sir Peter Pan.

Peter Pan, knighted by the Queen of the Fairies for his gallant conduct in rescuing Tinker Bell from a chest of drawers, conceived what Curly called a Great Idea. The world was horribly full of grown-up people. There seemed to be no end to them. They just kept on growing up and up until they became perfectly ridiculous; and Sir Peter saw that this mischievous process was likely to continue until the whole surface of the earth was crawling with persons, wearing whiskers and horn spectacles, unless something very drastic was done to teach the foolish old world the error of its ways. Pure ignorance, as he confided to John Napoleon, and not the inherent depravity of human nature, was responsible for the

universal abandonment of the principles of perpetual youth; and if by any chance he could plant the tiniest seed of the flower called Trillium, which blooms in the springtime of the year, in the heart of some nice boy who would one day be a great author and teacher, men and women might yet be saved from the tragedy of forgetting altogether the mystery and glamour of the dawn. So Sir Peter thought of all the promising lads he knew—"Ginger George," who had a passion for turning things upside down; "Chesty," who turned them outside in; "Welly," who defiantly snapped them into fragments; and "Flow-gently-sweet-Garvice," who spent the precious hours of prep. in hopeless attempts to piece them together again. None of these would serve. Obviously they would all grow up, and make enormous fortunes, and encourage the world in the mad heresy that the best things in life were on the topmost shelf, and could only be reached by persons who were too tall to see the treasures that were gleaming at their feet. Then Sir Peter gave a whoop that was most unknightly, and almost brought the ant-hill about his ears. "Eureka!" he cried. "There's Jimmy Barrie! Jimmy's the lad for me!" Up the winding staircase of the hollow tree he dashed, and, with Tinker Bell leading the way, flew off in the moonlight to Thrums.

If you think all this is merely pleasing fancy, you are wrong. There would never have been a

James Barrie had there never been a Peter Pan. Peter was out and about in this interesting old world long before his friend had discovered the curious fact that "Barrie" was pronounced "Macconnachie." He was born in the rosy morning of the ages; when he opened his eyes on life and chortled, the moment was so delightfully thrilling that all the sons of God shouted for joy. For they knew that though the world would grow bent with the burden of years and be a very sorrowful place by and by for many people, it would always have in its keeping the heart of a little child, and would find its solace in the laughter of youth and its fondest inspirations in the dreams that are born of the witching nights of Never-Never Land. From that day to this Peter Pan has been a very busy little boy indeed. He has been dropping the seed of the flower called Trillium in the hearts of poets like Shakespeare, artists like Millais, playwrights like Barrie, mystics like Francis of Assisi, and preachers like Alexander White, the Scot whose great white soul shone with the beauty of a goodness so young and fearless that it carried him into eternity with the joy of a saint and the majesty of a conqueror. Even simple folk like you and me find, in the really big moments of their lives, that, greater than all the wisdom of the world and the splendour of its achievements, is the knowledge of one joyous thing that is as changeless as the shining of the stars,

one supreme glory that can never be dimmed, one priceless gift that comes to us radiant with the loveliness of the garden-land that the Peris glimpsed outside the gates of Paradise—the spirit of undying youth: Peter Pan, knight-errant to the fairies, ambassador of wonder, and evangelist of joy.

Sometimes I feel very sore about James Barrie. He is a Scot who has deserted the glens and bens and the heather hills and the peat-reek of his "ain countree" for a Babylon that is splashed with tears. And I am minded to say the most horrid things until I reflect that doubtless Peter Pan had a hand in this business. It was Peter who saw what a dreadful mess men and women were making of their lives by the fulsome adulation of their own perplexities. Actually they were analysing their own souls and making pageants of their discoveries! They were dramatising their aches and pains, their miseries and shames and sins, dissolving God's almightiness in an epigram, and celebrating their own highly cultured abjectness in a series of corrosive epics. It was a form of psychological and spiritual inversion—the sacrament of penance standing on its head. There is only one cure for the introspective morbidity that eats at the heart of a society weary of everything but its own ineptitudes—and that is to bring back the laughter of childhood and the joy of youth and the gleaming simplicity of lost illusions. Peter knew this,

for the secret was born with him; so he whisked off Barrie from the hills of home, and dropped him plump into that seething cauldron of mental and moral sophistications, that "complex" of shams and agonies. It was worth while, I think, that "Abduction of a Distinguished Author," for our playwright raised the curtain on a world that the age had forgotten, and turned men's thoughts away from the chimeras of their diseased imaginations to the immortal hope that came to redeem life and to glorify it for ever when the first child was born.

It has been said of Barrie that he "idealised childhood." He did not; this sacred rite was performed by an unknown mother in the infancy of the ages. But just when we most needed the lesson, our whimsical schoolmaster revealed to us the astounding fact that all those delightful witcheries of thought and emotion at which we oldsters smile so tolerantly are not mere incidentals in the harmony of the child-life, but the very essence of its being, and that when humanity forgets them it forgets also the meaning of its own being. Peter Pan is immortal because he dwells in the heart of the race. He was born there, and is born anew in every mother's child; and because he can never grow old he confers upon us the heritage of immortal youth, so that even at midnight our young eyes can glimpse the dawn.

Pessimistic persons find a liverish sort of happiness in assuring us that organised religion is a back number, that the Church is on its last legs, that the superstition of the Nazarene is about down and out. Aristotle said something of the same kind, but in statelier numbers, a good many years ago, and Peter Pan has been laughing at him ever since. He is laughing still, as, like the industrious little apprentice he is, he keeps "polishing the handle of the big front door"—taking this decrepit old faith of ours and making its many facets shine with a new brightness, in the light of which every succeeding generation of weary men read the answer to their eager questionings. I have a tremendous belief in the Peter Pannishness of a religion that took a Child and set Him in the midst of a world already satiated with its own wisdom. It had grown old on a dietary of splendid sophistries; the Child looked out upon it with laughing eyes and taught it "a secret that courtiers dinna ken"—namely, that gladness and simplicity keep the heart young and the soul serene, even if the liver be a trifle troublesome! If, as I am politely asked to believe, the New Song, the New Life, the New Heaven, and the New Earth are merely intangible items in a beautiful dream, then Peter Pan and I will prefer to go on dreaming rather than chuckle with the devil (whom I had supposed to be a gentleman) over the fine ploy he has played on an unsuspecting and somewhat broken-hearted world.

From all of which it will be gathered that whether Sir Peter Pan wrote "James Barrie" or Sir James Barrie wrote "Peter Pan," our debt to one or other or both of them is illimitable. And we can never hope to repay it if we persist in growing old too soon. But, as Hazlitt says, "to be young is to be one of the Immortals," and the Immortals have plenty of time in which to show their gratitude to their benefactors and meet their obligations to their friends! Let us therefore take the wings of the morning to Never-Never-Never Land, where Wendy will keep house for us, and we shall dance on the sward to Slighty's piping, and Sir Peter will lead us in brave fights against pirates and redskins, and we shall grow so persistently and joyously youthful that haggard age will get the fright of her life and die! Then there will be a funeral, and it will be the jolliest old funeral the world has ever seen!

The Terrors of the Shavian Hell.

The Terrors of the Shavian Hell.

"JOHN," said the minister to his beadle, "the kirk's gey teem." "Why, John? Tell me, please!" "In my gran'fadder's days," quo' the beadle gravely, "she was fu'; in my fadder's days she was fu'; in my young days she was fu'. But these were the days when folk believed." "Believed in God, John?" "Na," said John; "in hell, minister! Ye've preached the kirk empty because yer hell's no' worth a button; it widna frichten a rabbit into the kingdom o' Heaven! An' ye'll tak' my resignation, minister. I'll beadle nae mair to a man fa disna preach the hail gospel o' salvation!"

Was John right? Is there any connection between the dwindling race of churchgoers and the attenuated doctrine of eternal punishment that has taken the place of the old fire-and-brimstone preachments which hammered out, demonstrated, and justified in Scottish pulpits the materialistic crudities of the Middle Ages? There may be; at any rate, John was not singular either in his candour or his exegesis. A ministerial friend tells me he was attacked recently

by a member of his session in much the same way. "Sir," said this worthy, "I have no wish to be rude; but the time has come for plain speaking. I have sat in your church nearly every Sunday for ten years; and the picture you have given me of God is that of a genial old grandfather dandling a lot of fractious children on his knee. There is evidently no place for the devil in your theology, and the hell you preach is merely an intellectual abstraction. Who cares for a grandfather God, an absentee devil, and a metaphysical hell? Nobody; there is little worth loving and nothing at all to fear. And this is why, though you work like a Trojan, the kirk's getting emptier Sunday after Sunday!" My friend is an able preacher, something of a scholar, an excellent organiser, and a very charming fellow. Yet he is faced with the tragedy of empty pews; and a member of his session tells him that it is because there is not enough hell-fire in his sermons.

When I saw "Man and Superman" for the first time recently, I wondered whether the Shavian idea of hell would have sufficient terrors to satisfy those disgruntled Christians for whom the underworld seems to be the very gate of heaven, and physical fear the surest passport to salvation. The Homeric hell, the hell of Virgil, the Miltonic hell, the hell of Dante—if these are to go the way of the Hebrew hell, it is manifest that some kind of Inferno

will have to be created in order to satisfy the spiritual aspirations of the excellent people for whom the eternal damnation of their neighbours is one of the most treasured articles of their faith.

Let me introduce them to Mr. Shaw. He is a friend in need, and therefore a friend indeed. He provides them with a perfectly satisfactory Pit—

> . . . "Where peace
> And rest can never dwell, hope never comes
> That comes to all; but torture without end."

There are no sulphurous fumes, no red-hot pincers, no "flames that leap and swell as 'twere to show . . . . the secrets of the sepulchres of hell." But there is worse, much worse, infinitely worse. There are the deadly, devastating, hammer-blows of talk! Words! Words! Words! A Niagaric spate of words! An eternal superfluity of words! Words that rise and fall and drip and run and rush and roar and overwhelm! Words and more words; and then more and more, and more, until, Heaven help us! we are submerged under a cataract of syllabic sophistries and metaphysical mummeries, and are left battling in a tumultuous chaos of ideas in which even the devil himself is thrown hither and thither ignominiously, like an old hat in a whirlpool or a dead dog in the Tiber on a winter day.

His talk was like a stream which runs
With rapid change from rocks to roses,
It slipped from politics to puns
It passed from Ma-homet to Moses;
Beginning with the laws that keep
The planets in their radiant courses,
And ending with some precept deep
For dressing eels and shoeing horses!

If terror will fill our churches, let the ministers preach the Shavian hell.

There is a drawback; a serious one, I fear. Don Juan, who does most of the talking in "Man and Superman," announced that he was tired of Gehenna and intended to move on to Heaven. Transfers of this kind seemed to be quite common; there were no passport difficulties, no sordid questions of visa fees. It did not seem to occur to Don Juan, and it certainly had not occurred to Mr. Shaw, that the entry of the Greatest Talker in History into Heaven would disorganise the whole life of the place, convert it into a synagogue of rampageous controversialists, and make it as intolerable as hell itself. The truth is, of course, that Don Juan carries his hell about with him wherever he goes; even into Heaven. It is the hell of a tempestuous mind, disguised as the mind of a dispassionate metaphysician, which is seeking for something it can never find, a concrete finality which has eluded it on earth, is indiscoverable in Hades, and is not to be had for the

asking in Heaven. The point is that Don Juan will keep on asking for it; and when asking fails, he will argue, and there is no conceivable point in eternity when he will get tired of arguing—tired of pouring out streams, rivers, and oceans of words, Shavian words that maze you, daze you, craze you by their plenitude and splendour.

And so we are reduced to the quandary that if we cannot stand the hell of Mr Shaw's devising, and refuse (as we are bound to do if there be any wit left in us) to enter Heaven with Don Juan, what is to become of us? I leave the answer to this question to the theologians. If they counsel us to stay where we are, I shall not blame them; but they will keep on emptying their kirks.

My Lady of Grace.

My Lady of Grace.

MY Lady of Grace is old, and she walks in an unwalled garden whose blossoms nod merrily across the valley to the sombre shadows of snow-capped hills. You may see her any day, for she does not hide herself from the world, not knowing that she is a Lady of Grace and a Princess of the Blood Royal of Fairyland—that ancient house which has ever kept watch and ward over the beautiful things of earth, and cared for them because of their simplicity and unaffected loveliness. Real? Oh, yes; real to the hem of her old-fashioned gown, real to the tips of her tireless fingers. Such brave fingers they are—worn with years of joyful service to kingly creatures in purple and gold who know nothing of their kingliness, or red hussars who, in far off days, despoiled Arabia of its fragrances, and of trembling little atoms in the green livery of the pixies that cower in shadowy corners as if they felt they were no fit company for the gallants whose splendour challenges even the flaming vesture of the dawn.

So My Lady of Grace walked in her garden, calling her flowers, one by one, by name, chiding this

one gently, praising that other, crooning over a weary little thing that hung its head forlornly as if its heart were breaking with grief and weariness. "They know, you know!" she whispered. "I am sure they know. If they can feel the warmth and its gladness, they feel also the chill of the evening and its pain. And if they hear the voices of the morning calling to them, why should they not hear me when I tell them of the love that is in my heart for them, and the happiness it has given me to serve them and their children through the long, lonely years? But even if they do not hear, they know. That is one of the things I am sure of, for we have been friends for more than a generation, and I have told them all the secrets of my heart. And they never repeat your confidences, even to the garden folk. There is no malice in my flowers. That is why they are so much more lovable than people. When they listen, they are very still and silent, and then they nod their heads so understandingly, and their breath is like the perfume of the Holy Spirit, comforting you."

I pondered how near My Lady of Grace was in her thinking to Mrs. Browning in her "Lament for Adonis"—

> "Ah, ah, Cytherea! Adonis is dead.
> She wept tears after with the blood that was shed—
> And both turned into flowers for the earth's garden-close;
> Her tears to the wind-flower, his blood to the rose."

Did not an eminent scientist insist the other day that there is no such thing as wholly unconscious life? There are degrees of consciousness, that is all. And wherever there is conscious life there is feeling, and wherever there is feeling there must be possibilities of passion, and where there are possibilities of passion there are also possibilities of goodness and love. It would be child's play, of course, to show the lapses in this reasoning; but it would need a very clever man indeed to convince me that My Lady of Grace was merely telling me an entertaining story to beguile a passing hour. I know her too well for that. She was telling me of the things she knew; and one who walks among the flowers and serves them must not lie, for it is a law of those children of the earth and sun that when dishonour touches them the spirit leaves them, to wander, bereft and nameless, for undying ages among the stars.

One other thing I love about My Lady of Grace. She reminds me of the king whose garments smelt of myrrh, aloes, and cassia. There is a Persian legend of a man who picked up a piece of clay that had a delightful perfume. "What art thou?" he asked. "Art thou musk?" "No," it answered, "I am only a bit of humble clay, but I have been near a beautiful rose, and it has given me its own sweet scent." I remember the late Dr. Hugh Macmillan—one of the most wonderful men I ever knew, with

the mind of a mystic, a poet, and a seer—describe how the king's garments were redolent of the myrrh, aloes, and cassia that were burnt as incense in the ivory palace out of which he came. It was his marriage day; and those sacred aromatic woods which were brought from Arabia, and were supposed to have grown in the Garden of Eden, were used in connection with the religious service. They filled the magnificent room—whose walls were inlaid with beautiful patterns of black and white, ivory and ebony—with their perfumed smoke; and so it was that the king, when he came forth, had his robes saturated with the delightful fragrance, and everyone knew where he had been and what he had been doing. So with My Lady of Grace. She carries about with her an atmosphere so laden with the perfumes of her unwalled garden that one knows exactly where she has been and what she has been doing. She has been among her flowers, speaking to them, tending them, loving them with all the purity and simplicity of her kind old heart. Wherever she goes she bears with her a gift that enriches empty hearts and stirs sluggish imaginations into life. For the fragrance that clings to her is the fragrance of a world to which so many of us are strangers. It is a world wholly different from that in which we move, and barter our souls for a crust of bread. It is a world lit with sunshine from the hills, swept and garnished with the

wind from the meadows, and ringing always with the music of the waters of the glen. It is a world of lowly, simple, unassuming things; tender, childlike, little things that an old woman cares for, artless in their loveliness, things that "knew not the doctrine of ill-doing, nor dream'd that any did."

Am I romancing? Oh, dear no! There is just such an old lady as I have been writing of; but "fat's her name and far's her hame, I dinna care to tell!" To be exact, I dare not. For My Lady of Grace must not be disturbed in her ministries. If you find her by chance some day, the gods will be kind to you. And you will know her by these tokens. She will talk to you as simply and directly as she talked to me. She will not question your right to know her secret. For she thinks it is a secret that all folk share, and that in the universal heart of man there is the same love for the "little things" that has made her life so beautiful. But I doubt it. For I am not of the Blood Royal of Fairyland. I am merely a crude, unhallowed mortal who has blundered by sheer accident into an unwalled garden where, more beautiful than the purple and gold and amethyst and coronets of violet blue, is the heart of My Lady of Grace.

The Drums of Dawn.

The Drums of Dawn.

ONCE, only once, have I heard them on the high lands of Lorne. There is a loch immortal in Scottish story, its waters, the old men say, still red at sunset with the blood of the clans; and as morning breaks and the shadows trail like weary ghosts beyond the brow of the tarn, an eerie silence falls—a silence that subdues all nature, and suggests not its peace buts its awful reserves. There is wrath in that quietude and winsome kindnesses, the hot breath of the storm and the smell of heather hills; and out on the waters, with oars poised for the stroke, I wait motionless for some voice, some sound, some touch of life—the soft whisper of the wind, the cry of the wren—to challenge the tense stillness that salutes the dawn.

It is a wonderful moment in the march of time when sombre night surrenders the field to the splendours of oncoming day. One feels that a thousand eyes are watching and a thousand hearts are stilled while the mystery of Creation is re-enacted amid the majesties of the everlasting hills. Here the world stands expectant between the old and the new, between the living and the dead, between the brave

fiat, "Let there be light!" and its sublime and eternal fulfilment. I think of Browning's great lines in "Pippa Passes"—

> "O'er night's brim, day boils at last;
> Boils, pure gold, o'er the cloud-cup's brim;"

and of Tennyson's fine thought in "The Lovers' Tale,"

> "A day for gods to stoop . . . ay, and men to soar."

Then I heard them, "fae ower the hills and far awa'," the rhythmic throb of the Drums of Dawn. And in an instant the silence passed. The wind touched the waters and ran laughing to the shore, where the trees rustled into wakefulness; I heard the rattle of a cart on the rutty highway; a strange voice from the headland hailed the ferry; and the murmur of the Falls of Lorne reached my ears. The sun peeped shyly over the snow-tipped ben—then, mustering courage, climbed the dizzy height. Day had come, the world was awake, and, dipping my oars, I made for home, with the thought in my heart that the eternal newness of Nature was at once a parable and an assurance of the eternal newness of all life.

The Drums of Dawn are not for the dead. They are the morning call to an all-conquering creation. "Rub-a-dub-dub!" they cry; "Awake and live! Awake and work! Awake and sacrifice!

Rub-a-dub-dub! Come forth and fight! Come forth and suffer! Come forth and triumph! Rub-a-dub-dub! Put on the garments of beauty, O Nature, and the weapons of warfare, O Man!" It may sound fanciful; but that is how I interpreted that wave of music from behind the hills of Lorne.

If some amiable divine would give a parson in mufti the freedom of his pulpit for half-an-hour, I should occupy my time to great advantage by conjuring my fellow mortals to take the cotton wool out of their ears o' nights, so that they, too, might hear the stately and inspiring roll of the Drums of Dawn. It is the one sound in all the world worth listening for, the one supreme call that echoes through all religion, all literature, all philosophy, all art and music that are worthy of the name. There is romance in it and adventure, and patience and fortitude, and the sublime courage of endurance. St. Francis of Assisi heard it, Columbus and Nelson heard it, and Wesley and Shaftesbury, and that glorious company of brave and buoyant youths from our own homeland and from beyond the seas who gave their fair white bodies to be hacked and blasted and burned for the splendour of an ideal and the honour of mankind. You can feel the thrill of the Drums of Dawn in the poetry of Kipling, in John Watson's sonorous verse, in Browning and Tennyson, in John Masefield and Alfred Noyes, in the philosophy

of Chesterton; and if you are a lover of that fine spirit, William Morris, you will find it in "The Earthly Paradise," radiant and alluring:—

> "Forget six counties overhung with smoke;
> Forget the snorting steam and piston stroke;
> Forget the spreading of the hideous town;
> Think rather of the packhorse on the down."

The greatest enemy of progress in all ages has been falsity; and the vilest falsity is that which preaches a pagan pessimism, combined with an equally pagan fatalism. There is no dawn, only night; no sound of drum on the far horizon, only the flapping of the wings of obscene night birds under a starless sky. John Davidson is dead; but I observe in some quarters an effort to revive the philosophy of hopelessness, of stagnant immobility and moral despair. "Amid the wreck of creeds," said the young English lord in "Tancred," speaking to the East, "the crash of Empires, French Revolutions and English Reforms, Catholicism in agony, Protestantism in convulsions, Europe demands the key-note which none can sound. If Asia be in decay, Europe is in confusion. Your repose may be death, but our life is anarchy." One hears this sort of thing, "mutatis mutandis," to-day. I have no patience with it. The ferment of life has its evil aspects, but it is not necessarily an evidence of demoniacal possession. It is proof rather that men have heard the throbbing of

the Drums of Dawn, and have gone forth on the great adventure. They have gone out blindly—but they have gone; they struggle foolishly perhaps—but they struggle; they wander in strange places—but they seek the way. There is the true pathos and sublime of human life, as I see it. It cannot rest on the lees; it must rise up and go forward; and, therefore, I refuse to be terrorised by what a popular writer calls "the insolent voice of an insurgent democracy." There is no insolence, but a wonderful and almost childlike frankness, in the voice of modern democracy; no insurgency in its march, but the elemental joy of the quest. It has heard the Drums of Dawn, and has gone forth with boyish ardour and thrilling expectancy to open the oyster of the world.

"The oyster of the world!" Don't try to limit that phrase, for it means everything. Our new democracy has an idealism which the Manchester school of economics never dreamed of, and which, had they dreamed of it, they would have hated. Democracy, the day before yesterday, wanted to live; Democracy yesterday wanted to live well; Democracy to-day wants to live deeply. In the Drums of Dawn it has heard something of the music of the spheres; and at heart it is stirred less by a vision of cosy comfort and class dominion than by the possibility of such mental and moral development that life, enlarged by truer knowledge and enriched by new experiences, will become for us and for our children the beautiful lady of our dreams.

A Question of Domestic Economy.

A Question of Domestic Economy.

A woman at Brentford asked for a separation from her husband because he insisted on going to bed with his boots on. "I cannot live with such a man," she said.—Daily Paper.

I GOT into dreadful trouble once with a highly estimable lady on account of certain observations which I permitted myself to make on the subordinate place of women in the domestic economy of the State. I sighed for the old days when husbandly authority stood at par, and when a father was a father still, the gayest dog alive. But surely it should have been understood that I sighed merely in a Pickwickian sense. No one who really knows me will insist, as this dear lady has done, that I am a "soured, disappointed, and disgruntled misanthrope, who should be exhibited in the British Museum as 'a relic of the stone age—a bachelor with the bile'." Nice, isn't it? And all wrong, too—as wrong as Muldoon when he came over from Kerry, with a brogue as broad as the back apartment of his Sunday breeks, and tried to pass himself off as a Cruden man! My bachelor days were numbered before my fair traducer had learned to say "Goo-goo!" And when I succumb

to a rapidly advancing old age, Burns's immortal lines will be found engraven on my heart—(again in a purely Pickwickian sense)—

> "Auld nature swears the lovely dears
> Her noblest work she classes, O;
> Her 'prentice han' she tried on man
> And then she made the lasses, O!"

As proof of my bona-fides, I extend to the Brentford lady my profoundest sympathy. No reasonable man would go to bed with his boots on, and expect the wife of his bosom to preserve the customary silence of her sex. However carefully he may wipe them on the mat, they cannot be as clean as they might be; and the impress of a pair of muddy boots on otherwise spotless bed linen is enough to aggravate any woman. If the gentleman were half rational, and insisted merely on going to bed in carpet slippers, no sensible housewife would object. There must be a good deal of give and take in married life, if the matrimonial bonds are not to be strained to breaking point; and when husband and wife do not see eye to eye with each other on any question of real moment, their best plan is to split the difference and arrive at a sensible understanding. This, indeed, is my sole difficulty in the Brentford case. Did the husband insist on boots and nothing but boots, or was he prepared to compromise on slippers? I cannot understand why the Court ignored this possible solution of the difficulty.

On the general question of wearing boots in bed, I fear I cannot give any authoritative guidance. Myself, I have never tried the experiment. It is all, I suppose, a matter of taste; and questions of taste are outside the ambit of argument. I know a man who once went to bed with his silk hat on his head, having first placed his boots carefully on the mantlepiece and blown out his watch; but he never actually contracted the habit, and his wife raised strong objections to what she regarded as an undesirable innovation. This, indeed, is where, very humbly and respectfully, I would venture a word of warning to all wives, present and potential. They are all more or less creatures of routine—lovely creatures, I allow, charming and delightful, but, still, creatures whose orbit is necessarily limited, and whose imaginative qualities have never had room to grow along broad, tolerant, and adventurous lines. Man, fighting the grim battle of life from day to day, would die a thousand deaths but for that indomitable spirit within him which is for ever seeking new avenues of escape from the dull decorum and unpicturesque commonplaceness of his ordinary surroundings; and this driving sense of the need of unfettered self-expression ought not to be stifled in the home. In the great world outside, man is himself, the master of his own destiny, the captain of his unconquerable soul; and when he returns to Salem Villa at eventide

with the dominant ego still raging in proud freedom within him, he should not be chided unfeelingly if he resolves to go to bed with his boots on, but weaned lovingly back to less uncommon ways.

The fact is, I am not sure whether we are doing the wise thing in frowning on those eccentricities of nocturnal deportment. A man, sleeping or waking, is greater than his habiliments; and it is perfectly possible that the minority who woo Morpheus in their boots are right, while the majority who go to bed with their socks on are fundamentally wrong. Scientific knowledge, advancing by leaps and bounds, may yet prove—and already we have scientists who are capable of proving anything—that boots worn night and day are conducive to health, happiness, and longevity, and that at least they have as much to commend them as flannel waistcoats and non-alcoholic nightcaps. This despised Brentford man may be the pioneer of a new era; and the time may not be far distant when every self-respecting husband, returning from his lodge in that spirit of exultation which so becometh a man and a brother, will make it a point of principle to go to bed in the full regalia of his order. Wives may object. I have no doubt whatever that they will object; but I hold with some of our most progressive thinkers that when a woman has promised to love, honour, and obey an inoffensive man, she ought not to boggle at

his boots. Nothing can be allowed to bar the path of science; and things have come to a pretty pass when a man has to choose between his wife and his foot-gear.

These remarks, you will understand, are offered entirely without prejudice to anyone's opinions. I seek merely to provide you with a foothold from which you may rise on the stepping-stones of your dead selves to higher things. I gather from the newspapers that most of us are wasting our time in senseless wrangling over matters that are as far beyond our control as the movements of the Pleiades. Reparations are important; Geneva is important; the shape, colour and design of Mr. Churchill's latest hat are important; but not one of these things comes home to us with greater poignancy than the tremendous problem of the dignity, utility, and scientific propriety of husbandly boots in bed. I am aware, of course, that other issues are involved—that emancipated woman, for example, will protest against a privilege which she herself is forbidden to enjoy. Let her protest. Emancipated woman may have her rights, but emancipated man has his place in the sun; and in future, when asking the great question, he will add in firm and dispassionate tones: "Subject always to the proviso that I shall, if I please, when I please, and how I please, wear my boots in bed!" Had the Brentford person taken this simple precaution he would be a happier man to-day, master in his own house, and the envy of all husbands in distress.

Gods and Men.

Gods And Men.

IN a verse which Melanchthon loved and found beautiful above all others in the poetry of Homer, there is a sentence of five little words which contains the pith of universal and age-long religious experience. "All men," we read in the "Odyssey," "have need of gods"; and on this simple basis was built up the structure of a great philosophy. From Homer to Mr. James Brown, sometime Lord High Commissioner to the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland, is a big step even for a long-limbed man—albeit, no doubt, a step in the right direction; but I pulled on my seven-league boots and covered the distance in a stride when I read in my morning paper the confession of an Annbank miner that he and his mates had never been able to "feel quite the same" towards their old comrade since that eventful hour in which, like a middle-aged Prince Charming, he had been wafted away in a beautiful car to the Royal Palace of Holyrood. Mr. Brown, I gathered, had "kind o' gone oot o' his class"; and from my lonely eyrie in the North I heard the object of this sorrowful judgment cry, like "Titus Andronicus," "These words are razors to my wounded heart!" It is indeed

true that "all men have need of gods"; but when our gods disappoint us, as they sometimes do, either by dying on our hands or by stalking out of the lowly temples in which we have been content to worship them and touring Olympus in regimentals, is there nothing left for us but to mock them like Elijah the Tishbite or weep over the forsaken shrines with Elizabeth Barrett Browning?

In spite of statistics to the contrary, supplied yearly by optimistic Commissioners in Lunacy, I have a feeling that Montaigne had some justification for saying that man was certainly stark mad. We humans cannot make a flea; but we keep on making gods by dozens. And having made them, we proceed forthwith to break them. It is a characteristic of our gods that, once set agoing, they persistently annoy us by getting out of their class. The gods are nearly all consistent and life-long nonconformists, and this, I fancy, is the real explanation of those impressive revolts against standardisation that vexed the soul of later thinkers and provoked the ire of Plato. Read, I pray you, Dr. James Adams's altogether delightful book on "The Religious Teachers of Greece," and see how philosophy was in turn beaten and baffled and carried to ignoble depths and borne on wings of inspiration to sublime heights of thought and contemplation by the stubborn refusal of the immortals to comport themselves in a manner within the meaning

of the Act of Uniformity. It is very difficult for any man to believe in the bona-fides of a god who will not do exactly what is expected of him. In dealing with this form of Olympian insurgency, we lack the patience and *savoir faire* of the ancients. Either they praised in epic song the gods who had the audacity to elude them, or they damned them gloriously in language befitting the pens of scholars and gentlemen; and it is one of the most delicious ploys ever played by the muses on the culture of our modern civilisation that those blessings and cursings are still accounted of more value than the perfectly unsullied pieties of the higher mathematics. Our methods with rebellious dieties are cruder, but quite effective. We lift a heavy fist and smash them—without benefit of clergy! Like Zeus we create and like Zeus we destroy; and then placidly we take our seat on the wheel of eternal recurrence, and proceed with the agenda "ab initio."

Now, in this matter of the gods I am all for self-determination. An age which insists loudly on making the world safe for democracy (though its proper job is to make democracy safe for the world) should not neglect the equally sacred duty of making the Pantheon safe for its deities. What I mean is that the men on whose altars we burn the incense of devotion to-day are no less worthy of our reverence when we discover on the morrow that they are bigger

and better than we knew. Quite the contrary, in fact. Even the gods have a right to grow. And when they grow "out of their class" and sit down on Olympian thrones they are merely telling us in their own dignified way that life is crowded with a great many wonderful and stupendous possibilities. Shakespeare was a strolling player until, claiming his kingship, he marched out of his class, and became, in rare Ben Johnson's words—

> "Soul of the age,
> The applause, delight, and wonder of our stage."

Sir Walter Scott might have gone on living the impeccable life of a Lowland lawyer had he not likewise come out of his class, and given to his great heart its freedom and to his mind the wings of imagination that bore him, a lone adventurer, back to the courts and battlefields of the Middle Ages and home again in the sunshine of a new day, his pinions gleaming with the glory of old romance. On every page of history, in literature, art, science, music, statesmanship, are the names of men who broke down or overleapt the granite wall of circumstance that environed them, and left behind them as their heritage to posterity the memory of purposeful and sometimes elemental personalities whose presence in the world has enriched all generations. They were of the tribe that Dryden classified as "God Almighty's men." Often their contemporaries hated them; some-

times they destroyed them. That does not matter in the least. It is they who count, not we. Even a dead god is better than a live nonentity.

So I get down to the core of this business. I know of no finer truth in Christian apologetics than this—and I say it with all reverence—that God Himself has come "out of His class." It is the mystery and wonder and glory of the Incarnation, most august and most joyous of all miracles, with a laughing child as the crown and expression of an everlasting purpose. When people complain to me of the staleness, the dullness, the stodginess of the Church, I want to examine the eyes that are blind to the splendour of a truth that shines like a star through all our formularies and above all our divisions. Man ennobles life by rising with much unease of mind and body above the tall towers and belching chimney-tops of a world so vast that it has lost all real sense of the illimitable; God ennobles it by coming right down into the very heart of its afflictions, bringing with Him all the romance and faithfulness of His own eternity. This is why in the Great War, amid the muck and filth and unnameable horrors of the trenches, our young soldier-poets sang the songs of knights in shining armour—why Rupert Brooke asked us to believe, in the face of a thousand conclusive "proofs" to the contrary, that—

"Honour has come back as a king to reign,
And paid his subjects with a royal wage;
And nobleness walks in our ways again;
And we have come into our heritage."

Haberdashers turned fictionists have made quite a good thing out of the ugliness of life; but even Mr. Wells's analytical mind has not been able to comprehend the length and breadth and depth and height of the incurable romanticism that persists in living, long after our realists have returned from its burial. It is the gladness of God that keeps the world from breaking its heart at the spectacle of its own stupidities: the God who by "emptying Himself" splashed over human life the sunshine of His goodness and all the gleaming treasures of His love. The Church's message can never be stale, flat, and unprofitable to any man who has glimpsed even a particle of this truth. For then he must know that the prayer of Ajax has been answered, and that the world has been flooded with "the light that never was on sea or land, the consecration and the poet's dream": and he will nestle couthily nearer to One in whose Presence are to be found, not the terrors of Almightiness, but fullness of joy and pleasures for evermore.

So I beg of Mr. Brown not to "fash his thoom" about the disgruntled philosopher of Annbank. After all, when one thinks the matter out carefully, one realises that no god worth speaking of

ever really abandons his class. Instead, he carries his class up with him—gives it a new outlook, a new perspective, a new starting point. This, indeed, is how the world has wagged since Adam delved and Eve span. It is the secret of all progress in life and thought, in nations and individuals. Tennyson's stepping-stones are not a moving stairway for the convenience of the languid and the obese. They are the symbols of effort and attainment; and the man who treads them bravely, humbly, and unselfishly has his feet on "the great world's altar stairs that lead through darkness up to God."

Kirks and Cabarets.

Kirks and Cabarets.

IT is evident that we shall have to evolve a new race of clergy. There was a time when the pale young curate served the purpose of his being admirably. He was such a dear! The old ladies mothered him, the dainty damsels of the parish sighed when he simpered and simpered when he sighed, and spinsterish maiden ladies of uncertain age shod his little feet in woollies and comforted him with chest-protectors. If anyone tells me the type was peculiarly Anglican, I respectfully but firmly differ. Very firmly! I have had a fair working acquaintance with most religious bodies in Scotland for nearly half a century; and I found that the Rev. Robert Spalding had his counterparts in unexpected places. If one of them sat on the rectory lawn making daisy chains and intoning the Thirty-nine Articles of Religion, another would lead me to a shady corner of the manse garden, to talk of slugs, milk puddings, and the total depravity of human nature.

Then came lads of a sturdier breed. Chatty little advertisements of this kind began to appear:—

Ministerial Assistant Wanted. Good cricketer preferred. Knowledge of Soccer indispensable. Fine opening for

former half-back. Apply, with references from last club, to 'D.D. (honoris causa)' at the office of this paper.

I have known a large number of those muscular divines. They were splendid fellows, with merry eyes, a jolly laugh, a punch that would have made Phil Scott pause, a considerable knowledge of the Hebrew scriptures, and a wonderful way with aul' wifies and little children. Some of them went over to France a few years ago, and never came home again: the others are growing old, and look out upon the world with the tired eyes of men who believe that they will never live to see the day when a collection will be taken at football Internationals on behalf of the Aged and Infirm Ministers' Fund.

Yet another type is emerging. Indeed, the news from Wolverhampton leads me to believe that it has already emerged. Presently the advertising columns of the newspapers will be enriched with "splash" announcements after this manner:—

WANTED! WANTED! WANTED!
Energetic Young Divine with Graceful Legs and a Good Voice.
Must Preach Well and Dance the Skaters' Waltz.
Applicants should send latest photograph, with repertoire of songs (comic), and list of minor accomplishments (theological), to Session Clerk of St. Sisyphus-on-the-Rocks: and the selected candidates will be expected to give a demonstration of their abilities, with a short discourse on the "Talkie" as an Aid to Devotion, after Evening Service.
Small Salary, but Liberal Commission.
N.B.—Only Clergymen who are Truly Evangelical need apply.

Really, I have no wish to make fun of this Wolverhampton experiment, especially as it was opened with a hymn and blessed by the Chief Constable, thereby guaranteeing its sanctity; but it occurs to me that when St. Paul was counselling his dear son Timothy to give full proof of his ministry, it is a pity he forgot to mention cabaret shows. Probably he knew nothing about them, which is another evidence that Pauline theology is out of date. My own impression of the personnel of the ministry is that it is made up in the main of average men who know their job, and do it, on the whole, fairly well. It is a rather exacting job. Those who doubt this should read the biography of the late Dr. Alexander White. Dr. White was a saint, and one of the most intensely human men that ever lived. His great aim was to convert Scotland, not to Presbyterianism, but to Christ; and everything he said and did was directed to that end. But I cannot imagine him running a Sunday night cabaret entertainment. Nor can I picture John Knox striding from the pulpit to the concert hall to give out a comic song. Not that I care very much what John Knox would have done; but there are still many people in Scotland who swear by him, though others merely swear at him. And I should hate to think that while he is trying to make it up with Queen Mary in the Land of Shades, he may have a rankling feeling at the back of his mind that

down here in Bonnie Scotland he is being wounded in the house of his friends.

It was Butler who said:—

> "Sure, religion was intended
> For nothing else but to be mended."

We are "mending" it all right; but what kind of religion is it that needs this constant patching? If those tireless Sunday night promenades on our principal streets are an evil, why have they been allowed to grow to such an extent that they have assumed almost unmanageable proportions? Has the Church been asleep? Has religion been on a long journey? Have the clergy been shooting at the wrong mark? Obviously there is something disastrously wrong with the home life of the people; and every student of social history knows that the home life of the people must either be based on religious sanctions or gradually wither until it crumbles at a touch. If this is true, or even approximately true, then it is clear that the religious sanctions on which so much depends have failed this generation. Why? I beseech the clergy, and not the clergy only, but every thoughtful citizen, to face that question. We may have our Sunday night cabarets, and they may be literally a "howling" success. But Sunday night cabarets do not seem to have anything in common with the stupendous Fact of Calvary; or if they have, the connection eludes my dull and inelastic

mind. We may fill our halls; but the homes will still be empty. We may get thousands to come in and sing, "John Brown's body lies a-mouldering in the grave"; but poor old "Praise-the-Lord-Barebones" will be companionless. In a word, we may decorate the branches of the tree with Chinese lanterns and dancing jackasses; but the canker that is eating at the heart of it will go on eating until the core is as rotten as a diseased pumpkin.

Probably, I am in a minority of one on this question. That does not matter. I simply do not believe in Sunday night cabarets as an adjunct of religion. They are no more "adjuncts" of religion than dance halls and leg-kicking revues; and the fact that a minister calls upon Mr. Silas Smithers to sing "When Father Laid the Carpet on the Stairs" hardly seems to make any difference. People who sniff at the "cant" of religion might find a still more tempting field for the exercise of their derisory talents if they turned their attention to the cant of a spurious modernity.

The God in the Garden.

The God in the Garden

THE Bishop stood by the swing in the garden, looking at it enviously. He shook his head. "No, no," he said; "I mustn't." "Why?" asked the little girl, curiously. "Does God say you musn't?"

"Well, not exactly," replied the Bishop. "I don't think God minds one way or another; but, you see, people would talk."

"Is people bigger'n God?" demanded the relentless child.

"Certainly not!" retorted the Bishop, with some warmth. "It is one of the common fallacies of the twentieth century that the intelligence and achievements of men place the creature on a plane of superiority to the Creator. Now, if you refer to what Tertullian——oh, excuse me, my child, I thought for a moment I was in the pulpit!"

"Is God glad when you are in the pulpit?" came the little voice.

"I—I hope so," said the Bishop, who was getting troubled; "but, upon my word, I am not quite sure!"

Then came a terrific question. "Do you ever see God from the pulpit?"

The Bishop gasped. He had never been more uncomfortable, not even as a young curate when an old saint had said to him one day, "My son, I've just been smoking a pipe with the Almighty!"

The child did not wait for an answer. "For," said she, "I often see God from my swing. I see Him walking in the garden. He does love flowers, doesn't He?"

"He does," said the Bishop softly; "and little girls on swings!"

The child nodded confidently. "I know," she whispered; "for He always smiles at me, and says, 'How d'ye do, little girl? What a nice swing you've got!' Does He smile at you in the pulpit?"

Later in the day I saw the Bishop on the swing. He was oscillating gently to and fro, with his feet trailing on the grass. And he was peering gravely into the jungle of green and gold, of purple and amaranth. Then he shook his head, and sighed. "Those children," he mused, "have the strangest fancies!"

There is no doubt that "children have the strangest fancies." But, still, there was that old saint who said: "I've just been smoking a pipe with the Almighty!" What in the world did he mean? "Tuts!" murmured the Bishop, impatiently, "Old Hilary was getting dotty!" Now, I should hate to contradict a bishop, but I am quite sure his lordship

was mistaken. "Old Hilary" and the little girl were twin spirits. The only difference between them was that the old man had rationalised his faith. That which was so simple to the child was no less simple to the saint; but the saint had seen something of its amazing implications. It made the child joyous; it made the saint humble. You might not think so from the apparent casualness of his words, "I've just been smoking a pipe with the Almighty!" It sounds irreverent, but only to the irreverent. It was just another way of insisting on the everywhereness of God. Now, if this were a religious book, I dare say I could, with a little trouble, write a very improving chapter on what is called the Divine immanence. But "improving" chapters are not in my line to-day. There is no more exasperating person on the face of the earth than the man who is always dying for an opportunity of speaking a word in season. He wants to make you better, and you don't want to be made better—by him. You will get better in your own way, and you will find God in your own way. And that is exactly what I want to say. He came to the child in a garden gleaming with glory; He came to the saint in a garret clouded with tobacco-smoke; He will come to the Bishop some morning, perhaps, when he is buttoning his gaiters. He won't come when you whistle on Him. He won't come to gratify either your dogmatisms or your doubts. What He likes best

is the silence of the morning and the peace of eventide. Yet, whatever the old prophets may have said, there are epochal moments when you hear the thunder of His voice in the whirlwind and the storm. Then truth becomes a tearing, rending, revolutionary force, turning the world upside down, making men joyful, brave, adventurous, and afraid.

I am not quite sure why I have got on this line of thought to-day. Perhaps it is because I am puzzled and made uneasy by the dogmatic accents in which some of my friends have been declaring the gospel of universal wisdom as they understand it. Those friends are of all types, all classes, all creeds and no creeds. But I am tired of it all, and I shall go back to the garden. The child is there, and truth cannot be far away when those clear eyes are shining and that happy laugh is stirring the evening air. Or I shall retire to my study and light my brier. Perhaps the Bishop will join me. We shall smoke a pipe with the Almighty. That is to say, we shall sit and think and dream; and in the quietness and peace of our human fellowship we shall catch some glimpse perhaps of the garments of truth's perfect loveliness, and of a face which is the face of One who smiled on the child in the garden, and looked with kindness on the saint in his little, stuffy room beneath the stars.

Poets with a Crop.

Poets with a Crop.

WITHOUT any desire to put on airs at the expense of my neighbours, I think I can claim that there are few men in Scotland who have had a wider circle of acquaintance among the poets than I; even Mr. Desmond Macarthy, who putteth down one and setteth up another with all the ease of almightiness, would have, on this point, to acknowledge himself outclassed. True, my poets are not the poets of whom Mr. Alexander Keith writes so charmingly now and then; Mr. Squire, who has his portion with Omniscience, has never even heard of them; and they contributed nothing to the decease of Mr. Grieve's chapbooks. In their pursuit of stately excellence our litterateurs miss a lot of fun, and go stravaiging into the Arctic regions of pure intellect when they might be getting ever so much nearer to the heart of this lovable old humanity of ours if they would just sit down and talk and listen in the cosy corners of life's simplicities. Not that I disparage either their work or their workmanship; on the contrary, I will confess myself their debtor till a' the seas gang dry. But they flit like gods among the stars; and there are so

many of us who can aspire to nothing higher than a little wooden hut at the back of Benachie.

One of the nicest poets I have known was a naughty, fat little man who cracked cribs. He cracked cribs, as he said to me, with the laudable object of earning sufficient money to be in a position to retire at an early age from the active pursuit of his profession, and spend his leisure in doing really "creative work." It was delightful to hear this burglarious person talk about "creative work." When I asked him humbly what he meant by it, he explained that the difference between creative work and "uncreative" was that the one was printed in the newspapers and the other wasn't. As a cracksman, he was hopelessly incompetent; but his ambition to retire was cordially encouraged by the police, and during the increasingly long spells of leisure that the justiciary amiably arranged for him, he courted the muses with enthusiasm and sang, in a cracked tremolo, the songs of Araby. From autobiography, as in "The Burglar's Lament," which he regarded as his masterpiece—

> "I was born a wicked burgular,
> Yet every time I fail;
> And if I do not mend my ways,
> I'll end my days in jail."

he passed lightly on an "Ode to a Gentle Warder." It began something like this—

"Ah, sir, although a warder, you
Have got a kindly heart,
And I shall grieve when fate decrees
That you and I must part.
Your voice is gentle as a lamb's,
I'd like to hear you pray;
To lose you sir, for freedom is
Too big a price to pay!"

In love poetry, the poetry of passion, he excelled. Here is a stanza from his "Song of Annabell"—

"Oh Annabell, dear Annabell,
I heard thy voice last night;
My prison bars hid not the stars,
It was a lovely sight;
And down the streaming light there came
The music of your song;
It fell upon my raptured ears
Like the sound of a dinner gong!
O Annabell!
My Annabell!
Like the sound of a dinner gong!"

"The trouble with me," he sorrowfully explained, "is that I am always clinking rhymes. I keep on doing it even in business hours; and then I get a little bit absent minded, and the police find me an easy mark. If I weren't such a good poet I'd be a better burglar!"

Another of my poetical friends was a dear, kind-hearted old murderer named Jones. Jones, if I remember correctly, had "done his wife in" with the kitchen poker; a revolting crime that followed fast on the heels of a revolting discovery. I liked Jones; and when I had heard his story and read his

verse, I was tempted to forgive him everything, even his poetry. He was a Wordsworthian, a lover of nature, but somewhat lacking, I should say, in the keen, analytical perceptiveness of the master. He was very proud of his "Reflections on a Lonely Buttercup." Again I quote from memory—

"Thou'rt all alone, dear buttercup!
Upon thy brow
Deep sadness dwells; and I, alas,
Am lone like thou!
All, all alone, poor buttercup,
Just you and me;
O, who will pluck us from this earth,
And set us free?"

If you cobbled the grammar a bit, something might be made of these lines. Many a man who never lifted a hand to a woman save in kindness would be rather proud of them. Not that Jones really wanted to be "pluck't from this earth." He found his little world astonishingly interesting, and would chuckle delightedly when he found a burly, beetle-browed scoundrel from the slums of Glasgow nursing with pride and tenderness a tiny field-mouse in his bosom. He loved Tennyson for his music and Browning for his thought; but the poet he preferred above all others was George Herbert, whose delicacy of fancy and quaint, old-world simplicity touched some hidden chord in this poor felon's heart. I heard him once quoting softly to himself that exquisite analogy of the tree, wherein

> "At least some bird would trust
> Her household to me, and I should be just."

There was a sob in his voice as he repeated the words, "and I should be just." For a murderer, he was a ridiculously soft-hearted man. But he was not such a lonely being as his little poem would lead us to suppose. "My mind to me a kingdom is;" and in his mind Jones companioned with greatness, and in his inner life walked in gracious ways.

To my gallery of poetical celebrities I must add the picture of a rat-eyed little Cockney, who had apparently convinced himself, and did his best to convince a sceptical society, that he was "an honours graduate of the University of Oxford," which he described on one occasion as his "materia medici." In his final year on the Isis he was within an inch of capturing the "Newgate" prize for poetry. There never was such a liar or such a poet. His idea was that as wisdom was truth, and truth beauty, poetry was the natural vehicle of philosophy; and therefore all philosophers were poets, whether they realised that appalling fact or not. If he wanted to express the idea of the infinite, he would do it, he said, like this—

> "Oh, the atomic insolence of thy littleness,
> Thou Earth! Not in crude matter but in thought
> Shalt thou dissolve, nor leave behind
> One wrack of insignificance. Thy abject name
> Shall perish utterly; but in empurpled spheres

Thy soul shall live, O Earth, thou fleeting thing
Of Time. And what is Time but Timelessness?
The vortex opens to receive the world, and then
The Infinite enfolds it in its All-ness."

This "honours graduate of the University of Oxford" was so proud of his pretentious nonsense that he asked me to have it printed in some "really erudite publication." I have now done so, and humbly invite the Philosophical Societies of Scotland to concentrate their massive intellects upon it, and tell me if this definition of the Infinite is quite according to Coker.

It would be unjust to the memory of a merry old vagabond, whom we shall call Jim, if I did not give him a place in these fugitive reminiscences of "Poets with a Crop." He amused himself by writing what he called "sacred verse," and setting it to the music of well-known rumpty-dumpty hymns. In his less devout moments he turned to the comic muse, and actually anticipated some of those delirious jazz effects with which modern society tickles its cultured soul. One of his efforts sticks in my memory—

"Oh, I'm a dude, I am,
Pom, pom;
I do the grand salaam,
Pom, pom;
I dance and sing,
I flirt and fling,
I'm up to every blessed thing,
Pom, pom;
To every blessed thing,
Ting, ting,
Pom, pom!"

Had he lived, Jim might have become a great man; but he was born before his time, in a generation that had not yet glimpsed the enormous financial possibilities of pure idiocy, and so, as I learned many years ago, he died in penury, "pom-pomming" with fine courage to the last.

These are only a few selections, taken at random, from my list of Poets Whom the Critics Despise. The gentlemen whom I have discussed thus briefly were crooks and assassins; Villons in miniature. They represent what is called "the criminal mind." Whether there is such a thing as a distinctively criminal mind I gravely doubt. There is so much that is bad in the best of us and so much that is good in the worst of us, that an intelligent visitor from Aristarchus would probably go home and report that we were a' John Tamson's bairns. And if the bairns sing a song now and then, shall we not thank them even for their broken melodies?

Dead Men Who Live Again.

Dead Men Who Live Again.

I HAVE been mooning among old books, sitting cheek by jowl with old friends. Not ghosts, you understand, but real, live men and women whose names are written all over literature, and who are more splendidly virile than most of the excellent folk you foregather with in your comings and goings. Queen Anne is doubtless dead—the announcement is repeatedly made in the newspapers—but you cannot suppose for one moment that Mr Pickwick is deceased to the same extent; or Sam Weller, or Sarah Gamp, or Cap'n Cuttle, or even Grandfather Smallweed, whose simple ambition it was to be carried into the nearest place of refreshment. Mr Podsnap is certainly not dead; he is now an eminent lecturer, and a great favourite with the broadcasting public.

If it were possible for you to get into touch with these immortals, and induce them to take up the threads of their lives in this twentieth century—parenthetically, I may express the purely personal opinion that they would be fools if they did—what could we find them to do? There is a problem for the Employment Bureau! Imagine Socrates on the dole! Think of Hamlet complaining to his Lodge that the

world was so disgustingly out of joint that his unconvenanted benefit had expired!

Let me tell you what I think. If Plato were ill-advised enough to pay a return visit to this world, we should probably try to save our faces by making him Professor of Moral Philosophy at St. Andrews University. What with golf and the irruption of a weird creature called Macconnachie, they have need of all the most moral philosophy they can possibly get at St. Andrews. In Aberdeen, where the people are all moralists and nearly all philosophers of sorts, the preference would be for Mr. Micawber. He teaches Hope, which is the spirit of eternal youth, incarnate in a lovely city. Glasgow would probably plump for Diogenes; his tub could easily be converted into a water-barrel. I think Socrates would suit Edinburgh. He was so intelligent. There was a nip of the east wind in nearly everything he said; and it is a good thing for Mr. George Bernard Shaw that Socrates drank the hemlock. Believe me, if he had survived his premature death, he would have become the foremost dramatist of the twentieth century, a biting, burning, interrogative satirist; and he would have bitten and burned to such purpose that instead of going to see Mr. Shaw's plays we should be writing letters to the papers pointing out that, while Shaw wastes our time answering questions that no one has ever asked, Socrates gets easily ahead of him

by asking questions that only an Immortal can answer. On the principle of "sweets for the sweet," and the witty for the wise, I think I shall reserve Rosalind for Dundee; it is an encouragement to remember that she ultimately married a duke?

What do the multitudes know of the play called "Hamlet"? Almost less than nothing, I am sorry to say. But they know the Prince of Denmark. They know him within a narrow ambit, but within that ambit amazingly well. And they know him largely from one phrase, a phrase which has passed into the currency of the street. "To be or not to be—that is the question." What manner of man said that? An honest man obviously, a man faced with a crisis in his life, challenged by fate or circumstances, called upon to make a supreme decision. Hamlet becomes concrete, palpable, not a shadowy figure of antiquity passing to a ghostly destiny, not even an actor in a play, but one's other self, one's fellow man, confronted with two issues, both implacable—the immediate and the ultimate, the urge of the moment and the eternal problem of right and wrong. I have heard these words, "To be or not to be—that is the question," spoken lightly, flippantly, stupidly, scores of times, but I have heard them spoken also with tears, and I have heard them spoken by poor men whom perhaps you wouldn't give twopence for, but who had the stuff of conquerors in their hearts, and

who in the strength of the vision that came to them of manhood wrestling with heredity, with environment, with hard luck and the world's bitterness, made one brave effort more to win through. I think there is room indeed, a whole universe of room, for a new and practical interpretation of Hamlet that will take him out of the stifling academic atmosphere in which we have so reverently enfolded him, and reveal him as a man with red corpuscles in his blood, a fighter against almost incalculable odds, one who made a tryst with fate and did not fear the issue.

We have done a great disservice to Shakespeare by taking this warrior figure and making him a kind of straw man on which all kinds of clever people may test the muscles of their minds. I had rather make him an insurance canvasser. Make him, indeed, anything you please, so long as you plant his feet in a real world, among real men and women with a real life to live, and a real answer to give to the eternal challenge, coming in a thousand forms, sometimes cynical, sometimes insolent, but always imperative—"To be or not to be!" An old friend of mine, the late Mr. Robert Gray of Peterhead, in a little monograph on Hamlet, which ought not to be forgotten by any lover of the poet who would understand his noblest work, says indignantly that to speak of Hamlet with the German Kreysigg as "a witty weakling" is sheer foolishness, born of vanity

and dullness. Witty he is, indeed, but not weak. He stands for what in man is noble, true-hearted, unselfish, and lofty of soul; and his tragic fate, rounding his life story, has opened to him a door to the universal heart, and bequeathed to mankind a great lesson—the lesson not only of revolt against vice and sham and crime, but of faithful adherence to a righteous cause, even unto death. We take leave of him—but only for the moment, for he is the heritage of heart and mind for ever; in the words of the requiem spoken by his friend Horatio—

> ". . . Good night, sweet Prince,
> And flights of angels sing thee to thy rest!"

"Cheerio!"

"Cheerio."

WHAT a humiliation!—to tumble into a coal-hole! Once that was my fate; in church, too, of all places in the world! I had a vision of Satan like lightning falling from heaven, with the fragments of a million stars dancing in mad delirium rounds his shining form; and thereupon the subsequent proceedings interested me no more. I was down and out. The rest was chaos and black night.

"Cheerio!" said someone; "Cheerio!" It sounded like a whisper from Elysium. I heard the singing of the birds and the music of splashing waters; bees droned in the garden, and a great red rose peeped over the wall, and nodded in the friendliest way. "Get up, old fellow!" it seemed to say. "Come up here beside me, kick your heels in the sunshine, and hear the singing of the trees. The world is not in smithereens, though your head be sore; and there is really nothing smashed but your vanity!" "Cheerio!" said a voice in my ears, a real human voice, with the peace of the morning in its tones, and the funniest little chord of laughter running, as I thought, up and down the stairs of memory.

Then I began to sit up and take notice; and, upon my word, I vowed a vow that never again in this welterous world should I allow the Tragic Sisters, with the Dean of St. Paul's as Chaplain, to mutter their maddening incantations over my soul. To keep such a solemn obligation will be no easy matter, for modern pessimism is an insidious and insinuating thing. It creeps into our philosophy, and colours our thinking; into our literature, and distorts our imagination; into our churches, and weakens our faith; into our hearts, and kills (or tries to kill) the tiny shoot of gladness that the good God planted there, when, in a supremely adventurous moment, He made man in His own Image and Similitude. But "Cheerio!" is a magic word; a charm; a vulgar Americanism whose coarse fibre shields the secret of the universe, the hope that never dies.

The worst disease that can befall any man in this world is not loss of place, possession, power, or pence, but loneliness of soul. Kings and their councillors carry this burden, and it is supposed to be theirs only. But every human life has its hour of tremendous isolation, when, amid the barbaric thunderings of the world and the eternal disharmonies of thought, it seems to stand aloof from every happening, desolate and alone. Circumstances wheel round it—round and round unceasingly; but they are detached from our experience, and we see them only

as the blind Jew beheld men like trees, walking. I am not a learned psychologist, but I know enough of human nature to understand the terror of that hour. When eloquent divines speak to me of the Christ of Nazareth, and call upon me to lose myself in the contemplation of the splendours of God's Eternity, I do not question their doctrine, but I tell them frankly that it is the Man who commands my reverence and such poor love as I have to offer Him, the Man whose "Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani!" made Him kin with all the lonely hearts in all the ages, and shook to their foundations the tall towers of the world's smug pride. "Cheerio!" Is that irreverent? I think not. It is just the plain man's "Sursum corda." It is the gospel of hope in embryo; it is Browning in the vernacular.

For, you know, "the best is yet to be." This does not mean that we are all going to have Rolls-Royces, and expansive bank accounts. It does not mean even that we are going to have peace and happiness. It means merely that life has not exhausted the riches of its experience, and that "at the next white corner of the road" we may have the most wonderful revelations—gracious manifestations of character and goodness and beauty and love such as eye hath not seen nor the mind conceived in the somewhat drummie days that are gone. After all, the best of life abides in life itself. It is not some-

thing outside of it, like fur-lined coats and motor-cars. Neither is it the rustling of the trees, nor the falling of a brown leaf into a blue, sunlit pool, though these are witcheries that, according to one's mood, fill the eyes with tears or the heart with song. It is in human personality that the best of life finds its epiphany—the resolute faith of man, the strong tenderness of woman, the courage that faces the night untremblingly, and the undying hope and dauntless expectancy that look into the eyes of the morning. I denounce and repudiate the pessimist because he concentrates his attention on things and circumstances, and forgets man who, by his very nature, by virtue of a personality which transcends time and its vagaries, is the lord and master of them all.

Therefore, I say "Cheerio!" I do not for a moment believe that the only progress we are capable of making in this world is either purely intellectual or purely mechanical. I believe, on the contrary, that there are depths of human character that have never yet been plumbed, heights that have never yet been scaled, avenues of thought and devotion that the foot of man has never trodden. You may regard evolution either as a fact or a theory, but at least it is a working hypothesis of life; and if it does not explain all mystery, it illumines many dark corners of human experience, and throws, I think,

its beams forward on the future rather than backward on the past. It bids us onward—onward without haste, but also without fear; for man is an organism, a growth, within whose bosom is a life of hope and exploration, of thought, emission, desire, and will; of endearing vagrancies and deep wells of love.

That is why the beautiful things of life are almost worth saying our prayers to; and by the beautiful things of life I mean the endearing, uplifting, strengthening attributes of personality. I mean what Moore calls the light that "lies in woman's eyes" and the laughter of the children in the street; the understanding word; the courage that endures; goodness without phylacteries; the romance of sacrifice and the chivalry of service. I mean the faith that never fails, the hope that never wavers, the love that is steadfast as the morning star. These are the things that matter, for they are the things that remain; and therefore I turn my back upon the pessimists, and take my stand with the Cheeryble and Mark Tapleys, and the lads and lasses who do not care a straw for the gloomiest philosopher in Christendom, because they have in their hands the promise of the future and in their hearts the gladness of May.

"Cheerio!" I say. Drive the black dog back into its kennel, and, with staff in hand and knapsack

firmly set, step out bravely upon the sunlit path, greeting the morrow with a shout of welcome, the future with a song!

G. K. C.

"G. K. C."

MR. G. K. Chesterton is a man who, in his time, has played many parts. He is not only a novelist but an essayist, not only an essayist but an historian, not only an historian but a playwright, not only a playwright but a poet, and not only a poet but a biographer. And while I love his poetry, admire his novels, find a keen delight in his essays, and an almost mischievous joy in his historical studies, it is as a biographer that he makes his strongest appeal to my sympathies, and most easily captures my imagination. His study of Browning is a masterpiece of analytical criticism; criticism that probes and pierces, takes down into little bits, and then laboriously, lovingly, reconstructs. It shows us the man and the poet, warts and all, judiciously, understandingly, with scholarly knowledge and human insight; and yet I have never been able to rid himself of the feeling that in this biography—if it may be called a biography—Chesterton is like a man who is describing something which just eludes him, something that he would love to hold in his hand and press to his bosom—if he could. Browning appeals to his intellect, Dickens to his heart; and that is the reason why

his book on Dickens has a warmth and colour and an intense human interest which (as it seems to me: possibly I am prejudiced) his study of the poet lacks.

Mr. Chesterton's place in literature has not been gained simply by the greatness of his art; it is his art plus an insatiable curiosity about life, and an almost passionate love and understanding of human nature, that has made him a man apart, distinct from the writers of his generation. Human nature is not to be made use of by him professionally either as a ladder or a foil. It is an infinitely precious thing—beautiful, vagrant, full of mystery and the most alluring possibilities, often sordid and contemptible and mean, but even in its tatters preserving traces of its ancestry, and stamped with a destiny that is not of this world. That is why there is not a trace of cynicism in anything that Chesterton has ever written. He sees clearly what Dickens perhaps only apprehended—the divine image in man; and no one who perceives the tiniest evidence of God in his neighbour can ever, as Mr Braybrooke has said, be either a cynic or a pessimist. In their knowledge of and affection for, simple people, Chesterton and Dickens are "two minds with but a single thought, two hearts that beat as one." It is in private life, according to "G.K.C.," that we find the great characters—the common people out of whom Dickens made kings who reign in perpetuity, kings whose thrones no revolution

of thought or custom or tradition can overthrow. The natural man is the most fascinating study in the world; and "you will find him," writes Mr. Chesterton, "adrift as an impecunious commercial traveller like Micawber; you will find him but one of a batch of silly clerks like Swiveller; you will find him as an unsuccessful actor like Crummles, and you will find him as an unsuccessful doctor like Sawyer; you will always find the rich and reeking personality where Dickens found it—among the poor." In other words, the real dramatic forces of life are all around us, hidden in the commonplace. It is in our daily life that we are to look for the portents and the prodigies. This is the truth not merely of the fixed figures of our life, the wife, the husband, the fool that fills the day. Always there are the Tootses and the Swivellers, the Guppys and the Joblings, the Simmerys and the Flashers. There is the real gospel of Dickens, as it is the message of Chesterton: the inexhaustible opportunities offered by the liberty and variety of man.

Principal Sir George Adam Smith has spoken of Mr. Chesterton's moral influence. There can be no question of that; but Mr. Chesterton does not set out to be a moral influence. His moral influence is simply an inevitable corollary of his faith in man, as his faith in man is the natural overflow of his faith in God. Man is a creature of infinite dignity because he is allied to eternity; even in his littleness he is great.

He is great, indeed, even when he is a fool, like Mr. Dick; "great because he has a soul that glorifies his weak and foolish body." This is where Dickens and Chesterton meet, hand in hand, heart to heart. They both love the weak and foolish things of this world, and, loving them, understand them. But whereas Dickens draws them as he sees them, Chesterton tries with subtler intellect to draw them as they are, linking them up not merely with their surroundings but with the eternal forces that are shaping the world. This explains why some of his novels seem to the uninitiated like the wildest extravaganzas. What can they make of "The Napoleon of Notting Hill," "The Flying Inn," "Manalive," and "The Ball and the Cross?" Without the key to the writer's mind, these books are and must always remain unintelligible. But when we understand that the dominant conviction of Chesterton's life is that the supreme quest of every man is the quest for God, and that this quest is full of the most amazing possibilities, the most astonishing and romantic adventures, we are able to see the perfect balance and unrivalled sanity of his most impossible tales.

I hope no one will imagine that I am trying to portray Mr. Chesterton as a kind of literary pietest, a lay preacher disguised as a man of letters. That would be offensive nonsense. What I am trying to say is that he has a philosophy of life which relates

itself instinctively to supernatural values. And it is a philosophy which sees the gladness and beauty and splendour of life even under conditions which, to the conventional moralist, would seem rude and barbarous, and possibly evil. There again he joins hands with Dickens. "Inn" he calls a "noble word," and beer is a drink fit for the gods. Laughter and music and merrymaking are great things, great gifts and blessings, necessaries of life; and I can see this big man skipping round the maypole with the children, or dancing with the maidens on the village green, or roistering gaily—innocently because gaily—in the refectory with the monks of the Middle Ages. All life is good; there is nothing alien to it save hypocrisy and snuffiness; and the sound of its gladness, no less than the cry of its sorrow, has its echo in the heart of God. I think that is the core of Chesterton's message; at least it is what I find in him.

The Saint and the Shrew.

The Saint and the Shrew.

AN English magistrate, discussing a case of matrimonial infelicity, remarked the other day that, after many years of judicial experience, he had come to the conclusion that "more homes were wrecked by bad-tempered women than by foolish and backboneless men." And he added: "I can conceive of nothing more useless, unless for mischief, than a termagant and shrew." Softly, sir! Softly! Let me tell you a little story.

Some years ago there died in the South of Scotland a very worthy and learned divine. The newspapers praised his piety, did honour to his scholarship, commented on his detachment from the world. Their eulogies were generous but sincere. "The deceased gentleman," as they called him, was not only a model of all the virtues, but a student whose fame as a theologian extended far beyond the boundaries of his parish. But for his modest and retiring habits he would undoubtedly have attained to high dignity and preferment in his Church. He was a silent member of his Presbytery, which he attended rarely, and it is said that only once in his long lifetime was he present at the General Assembly.

Social functions of all kinds he eschewed, and he took no part whatever in the public affairs either of his little township or of the county. But he was a faithful shepherd of his people, going out and in among them with an almost child-like simplicity, and every night he thanked God for putting their hearts in his keeping, and was glad because his love for them was returned a hundredfold.

His preaching was as simple as his life, and it was all about the love of God and the Eternal Mercy, the graciousness of the saints and the mingled strength and gentleness of Jesus. Now, this old and venerated minister was once a very harum-scarum young man. He loved life as it was lived in his riotous little circle, and he was determined to see "good" days. He got an ordinary Arts degree by the skin of his teeth, and then, to please his people, entered the Divinity Hall, and in due course qualified —just that and nothing more—for the ministry. By-and-by he received his first "call" (and his last), and thereupon he married.

It was an unhappy marriage—and the making of him. His wife was a shrew, who found the domestic circle too small an auditorium for her clattering tongue. She busied herself with affairs; pulled the strings so successfully that she was given a seat on some kind of minor National Commission; was a regular frequenter of the Assembly parades in

Princes Street; became a militant pioneer of "women's rights"; and had the gratification of seeing herself alluded to in one of our daily newspapers as "a strong and resourceful personality." At home she ruled with a rod of iron—and talked with a tongue of brass. Little by little her husband learned the art of self-effacement. Pastoral visitation was a bore, but it was less intolerable than his wife's tongue. By-and-by he found that it was not only a refuge but a strength; and slowly and painfully, but surely, through the years, there grew that heart-to-heart intimacy between his people and himself which was broken only by his death. At home he found solace in his books. First he read in a desultory, capricious way; then he chanced on what he imagined was an interesting sidelight on an obscure point in theology which was at that moment exercising the public mind, and from that moment his student days began. Except for this friendship with his parishioners, he became a recluse, almost an anchorite, a man of thought and prayer, for whom theology was no longer drab, dreary and dismal, but the Queen of Sciences, "fit handmaid," as he once said, "for the King of kings."

Now, take the English magistrate's dictum, and over against it set these facts. "I can conceive," said this Solon, "of nothing more useless, unless for mischief, than a termagant and shrew." Well, here

was a termagant and shrew who was far from useless. Consciously or unconsciously, she saved her husband from becoming that most miserable of creatures, a little, ineffectual man of God. She made him; saved him from himself. I have no wish to argue from the particular to the general, and make the rash assumption that the only way for strong-minded wives to bring futile husbands to their senses is to play the sergeant-major in their homes. But I am inclined to give this lady the benefit of the doubt. She had not only native ability but a knowledge of the world; and she was probably shrewd enough to know that so long as this light-minded husband of hers found the way easy and the going good, he would go on drifting through life, with no thought of the morrow and little care for anything but his own comfort and peace of mind. So she put him on the rack, and converted a feckless sinner into a saint. There is a monument to his memory in a little country churchyard in the South, "Erected by His Loving Wife." The villagers shook their heads sadly at this "awfu' lee;" but I think that possibly the angels understood.

I have seen the inside of more clerical homes than I can remember, and I have never met anyone who bore the slightest resemblance to the lady of whom I have been telling you. If the wives of our Scottish ministers have set out on an "improvement" crusade, they adopt other methods; though frankly,

I am not sure that many of them aspire to the distinction of transforming their husbands into shy scholars and silent saints. In many instances that might be a work of supererogation; but, in any case, the one ambition of the Lady of the Manse is to make the home circle happy, the one little corner of the world where a tired and often sadly disillusioned man may find the peace that eludes him in his parish, and perhaps a little balm for his wounded pride. I have an unbounded admiration for her, especially when I know that often behind the brave eyes is a mind worn with grave anxieties, and that the happiness of the home is bought at a price of which heritors and kirk-sessions have not the remotest idea. A parish minister told me that until the scandal of the poorer charges was removed, the escutcheon of Scottish Christianity would not be clean. "Those disgracefully underpaid clergy," he said, "are wonderful, but their wives are great!" "Yes," he added, after a pause, "that is the word—great!" Everyone who knows the facts will agree with him.

My Frien' Tammas.

My Frien' Tammas.

IF you knew Tammas, you would understand at once why I love him—a great, strapping loon, with the happiest laugh you ever heard, and the sunniest eyes that ever looked out on the North Sea from the rugged coasts of Buchan. He is 35, if he is a day, and he is something of a man of the world, for he has been as far afield as Yarmouth with his boatie, and it is the dream of his life to make the grand tour to "Lunnon," and see the King; yet he is as tightly tied to his mother's apron-strings as the lankiest laddie in the village.

"Tammas," I said to him lately, "why don't you marry a bonnie lassie, and settle down in a home of your own?"

"Mairry? Me mairry?" he exclaimed. "Man, my midder wadna lat me!"

Here you glimpse a very interesting fact. Our villagers are a Bible-loving folk, and could entertain you for hours at a stretch with disquisitions on the idolatries of ancient Israel. They know all about the Kings of Judah and the domestic infelicities of Solomon Rex; but no amount of Scriptural knowledge will ever reconcile them to the system of patriarchal

sovereignty. They must have some difficulty with the census papers, for tradition, handed on in an unbroken line from generation to generation, has taught them that the head of the house is not the "fadder" but the "midder"—the aul' wifie wi' th' white mutch, whose writ runs unchallenged and unquestioned through all the ramifications of the family life. As long as she lives she is queen, not only of hearts, but of the homes of her stalwart sons; and daughters-in-law are too wise to dispute an authority which gives immense prestige to their sex, and which they themselves hope one day to enjoy. Even when the old ladies die, the spirit of the matriarchy lingers. Every subsequent circumstance of life is referred back to similar circumstances "when midder was aboot"; and as far as possible, life is fashioned according to her standards, and thought directed in harmony with her will. You may call this the "dead hand" if you please; but at all events it is a hand of power, compared with which the influence of many a mother still in the flesh is "deader than the bloom of yester year." I read an article the other day entitled "The Middle Class Family in Dissolution"; and the writer traced the evil back to the insurgency of the child and the decay of parental authority. I see no evidences of this social cataclysm in the home life of our fisher folk. There the family remains the unit—self-centred, and somewhat self-satisfied maybe, but

linked together by strands of affection and traditional home-consciousness that are apparently unbreakable: and there also "a mother is a mother still, the holiest thing alive."

Tammas, you will gather, is a fisherman; and, like most men of his calling, he has a profound—yet quiet and almost inarticulate—veneration for the sea. Traces of the old pagan superstitions still linger among those who "do their business in great waters;" but the dominant feeling may best be defined as a kind of theistic mysticism: a deep, personal sense of the Presence; "a Something," says Tammas, "that ye ken brawly is there but canna weel speak o', gin ye understan'." I have tried to understand; and what I think they realise out there is not simply God, but more than God, if one may say so: soul-disturbing adumbrations of eternity: shadowy but intensely real conceptions of time and space that Einstein never had the luck to dream of: revelations of infinite mysteries of Being that rise from the bosom of the waters and glow in the cold shining of the stars. "Whiles," said Tammas to me one day, "whiles I'm maist awfu' feart o' the Lord Almichty!" A Norwegian officer, the victim of frightfulness, who, during the war, spent two nights and a day in an open boat, told me the same thing in a different way. "I felt like a man," he said, "who was alone with a passionless Providence." The austerity of God—this, I think is

the phrase that crystallises the experience I have been trying to describe; and here, perhaps, you may find the reason why Tammas and so many of his mates, when they step ashore, respond with gladness to the religious appeal to the emotions. The indefinable takes form; and the austere God, now benign and beautiful, clothes himself in garments of beaten gold.

To me, one of the most fascinating characteristics of those people is their fondness for multisyllabic words. Among themselves, "that little word 'Imphm'" has a bewildering variety of meanings, and "Oh, aye," can be put to quite as many uses; when they do expatiate at length, their language is simple enough for the youngest bairn in the village to understand. But hear them when the minister "staps ben," or the doctor, or even the school-mistress, who is generally regarded as one of the family. The diction changes, and you can stand at the foot of the Kirktoon and listen to the roll of Johnsonian sentences that almost drowns the thunder of the breakers on the beach. A cleric of my acquaintance, paying his first pastoral visit to the venerable worthy with horn-rimmed spectacles and a tasselled cap, was first amazed, then amused, and finally delighted with his welcome. "Aye!" said the old gentleman, tapping his snuff-mull. "Oh, aye! Imphm! Ye're frae Glesca, I'm tauld. It's a Godless place, Glesca; a ceety o' a thousand unmentionable abominations.

Ye'll fin' this toon gey deeferent—an indumitable wee toon, sir, wi' opportunities for wark that will extrac' fae ye a' th' benefeecial energies that th' Lord has blessed ye wi'. But I ha'e nae doot, sir, that, wi' th' help o' God and the britherly co-operation o' yer Session, ye'll manage in th' course o' yer varied experience o' pastoral veesitation in this community tae adapt yersel' tae th' shootabeelity o' th' consequences!" When any of our villagers talk to you like that, you may flatter yourself that they are paying you a very high tribute of respect. It is their way of recognising your superior culture, and the bigger the words the higher, believe me, do you stand in their esteem.

Tammas is not yet a master of this form of linguistic rotundity; but he promises well, and when he has shed his callow youth his sentences will flow as glibly and swell as sonorously as his most accomplished neighbours. His finest effort so far was made at the last municipal election: "Yon candidates for municipal honours," he confided to me, "ha'e aboot as muckle intelligence in their skulls as a herrin' in th' net. Their ae idea, as far as I am able to understan' th' proposeetion ava, is tae get in: and ance they're in they'll stay there till someane has th' sense tae throw them oot again. Then they'll no' be muckle better than 'spents' on a Monday mornin'!"

Let it be understood that I have not been exhibiting Tammas to the public gaze as a singularity. He is not one, but many; the type of a class which frankly refuses to identify itself with the passions of the hour. Its members have been called obscurantist, narrow, self-opinionative, egotistical; but our fisher folk can console themselves with the thought that while sticks and stanes may brak' their banes, names will never hurt them. They have their faults, like the rest of us; but they possess just those qualities that the world stands most in need of to-day—quiet courage, single-minded devotion to duty, simplicity of thought and sincerity of speech, steadfast loyalty to "their ain folk," and a wonderful consciousness of something in life that will have to be reckoned with in the end. Tammas, at any rate, is like that; and whether you write him down an untutored philosopher or an uneducated religionist, he has one advantage over most of us, for he holds in his keeping the secret of heart's content.

The Professor's Drum.

The Professor's Drum.

THERE was a Scots professor once—curiously enough, his name was Hyde—who played the drum. He was a Professor of Divinity—a very stern, very orthodox, very uncompromising divinity indeed; a divinity without frills or furbelows. Parenthetically, it often occurs to me that there may be some kind of occult connection between clothes and theology, though whether the clothes dictate the theology or the theology the clothes is as much a problem as that postulated by Diogenes one evening when he came home rather late from his club—"In the case of the hen and the egg, kindly state the order of priority." With wasp-like waists, the bustle, and the crinoline, we had a constricted divinity wrapped up forbiddingly in the voluminous garments of a grim traditionalism, while to-day, "popular" divinity, like Belinda's evening gown, begins with an ellipsis and ends precariously with a lacuna, and it trips along as gaily as the sweet young thing herself when her observant eyes perceive golden youth leaning lazily against a sunbeam in the garden. This, as I say, is merely a passing thought; yet it is not without its value in our study of the amazing change which took

place in the character, manners, and deportment of Professor Hyde.

For thirty years the Professor was known throughout the length and breadth of Scotland for the depth and intensity of his Calvinism. During this long period his convictions never wavered by so much as a hairbreadth from their first fine rapture; and as his arguments were based on the impregnable rock of syllogistic reasoning, he strongly resented the suggestion of the Principal that once in a decade at least his lectures might be rewritten—or, if this were impossible, perhaps it would conduce to an agreeable variety if the Professor could see his way to interpolate a few reflections on the Socinian reactions of modern thought. Those of my readers who have been Professors of Divinity will understand how bitterly Dr. Hyde resented these suggestions. A Professor of Divinity is not like a Professor of Economics or a Lecturer on Statistics. Truth is his merchandise, and Truth is eternal, as unchangeable as the everlasting hills. Let the winds of modern thought howl round it as they may, it remains for ever unaltered and unalterable, the one and only enduring force in life. Professor Hyde snorted violently, and went home and banged his drum.

Now, in those days not many Professors of Divinity owned drums. It is different in our own time, thanks to the spread of musical culture and the

influence of the Higher Criticism. Professor Hyde's drum was a family heirloom, and for many years he hated the very sight of it, banging it only on occasions of great mental and spiritual strain. He never attempted to play tunes on it, feeling that it would be improper for a Professor of Divinity to be guilty of such levity. Thus he missed one of the most refining influences of the home, and denied himself those happy hours with the drum which modern Professors of Divinity, with their children and grandchildren around them, love so well and use so profitably.

There is, says Shakespeare, "a divinity that shapes ours ends, rough-hew them how we will." Had the poet been more specific, I might have been able to describe with accuracy the nature of the influence that crept into the mind of Professor Hyde, and resulted in such a revolutionary change of opinion that the whole University was startled out of its accustomed lethargy, and the Senatus violently awakened from its dreams. Dr. Hyde became a Latitudinarian. The Principal tried to hiss the word, but failed; it sounded rather splendid in spite of his attempt to invest it with the horrors of maleficence. The Professor's eyes twinkled; they had never been known to twinkle until that moment. "Call me what you please," he said, "but, believe me, I have at last found the key-word of all divinity. It is Love, not Fear; Revelation is a canticle, not a road-roller. God

doesn't need the definition of formularies; He defines Himself. You have never heard of Mendelssohn's 'Songs Without Words'? No, of course not. But they contain the secret of the universe. Love is silent save in the rhythm of the eternal harmonies. Such divinity as I know shall henceforth find utterance in the music of my drum!"

Then "the band began to play." The "band" in this instance consisted exclusively of Professor Hyde's drum. He carried it on his shoulders to the class-room, mounted the rostrum, swung the instrument into position on the crest of his embonpoint, and with a loud bang called the students to order. "Gentlemen," he said, "speech is brazen, music is golden. Rhythm is the only vehicle of Truth; melody is the soul of all divinity. Henceforth I shall be silent, but my drum shall speak. It will reveal the horrors that lurk in the abysmal depths of Calvinism"—and under the spell of his amazing artistry the drum rumbled and groaned and thundered as if a hundred devils were struggling within it for the mastery. "It will teach the nobility of thought, free and untrammelled, buoyant and brave and pure as the sunshine on the peaks of Sinai"—and the room rang with exaltation and victory, soft cadences of thought rising into "The March of the Adventurers" and ending in the thrilling reverberations of achievement. "It will show you the beauty

of Love, the simplicity of Goodness, the nobility of Meekness, the power of the life that keeps itself unspotted from the world"—and there was magic in the drum, for as the pulse of its music rose and fell one sensed the fragrance of flowers, and heard the ripple of cool waters, and saw in the distance great hills of purple and amethyst, and on their summits silvery towers from which came the bugle-notes of peace.

"That," he said, "is the first of my new series of lectures on divinity. To-morrow, with the aid of my drum, we shall examine the Doctrine of Election."

But Professor Hyde was prevented by "circumstances over which he had no control" from keeping his word. Within two hours of the unprecedented scenes in the Divinity Class-room, the Principal collected the Senatus, and the Senatus collected its wits; and the Professor and his drum were suspended from the exercise of their functions pending an inquiry into all the facts bearing upon or pertaining to the orthodoxy, sobriety, and mental condition of the Rev. James Hyde, D.D., of the Chair of Divinity in the University of Craigenputtock. It was an inquiry for which the good man did not wait. On the morning of the day following his suspension it was found that he and his drum had disappeared; and so complete was the disappearance that they were

lost for ever to Craigenputtock and the Kingdom of the Scots

As I finish this chapter, a friend calls my attention to the following extract from "The Memoirs of a Lady of Fashion":—"At Drury Lane to-night. A tiresome play, but such a wonderful orchestra! The big drum is played by an old man with long, silvery hair, and the merriest eyes that I have ever seen in a musician. His name, I believe, is Hyde!"

The Joy of the Jumble.

The Joy of the "Jumble."

I AM willing to wager that not five out of every hundred of my readers have ever attended a "Jumble" in their lives. In correct ecclesiastical circles, I understand, the "Jumble" has fallen into disfavour. It is now a "Rummage Sale"; and a clerical friend informs me that one advantage of this change in nomenclature is that a forthcoming "Rummage" can be included in the "Pulpit Notices" without loss of dignity, while the mere mention of a "Jumble" brings an irreverent smile to the lips of the Duchess, and shocks the dustman's wife.

But what's in a name? A "Rummage" is a "Jumble," and a "Jumble" is an omnium gatherum of the most extraordinary nick-nacks and oddments that the mind of woman ever conceived—from fish-pans to moleskin trousers, from lady's wardrobes to aul' lum hats wantin' a croon, from fur coats to tin tags for travelling trunks.

Psychologists have universally ignored this profitable field of study. Why is it, for example, that when you ask the Duchess to act as saleswomen at a rag-and-bone counter, she smiles sweetly and says: "How jolly!" while the dustman's lady tosses her

head disdainfully and exclaims: "Wot? Me? I doesn't stoop to that sort of thing. It ain't my class!"—or words to that effect? Possibly this is merely another example of the "inferiority complex"; but why, in that case, does the dustman's wife make no bones about turning out in full force on opening day to replenish the family wardrobe with the articles she would not stoop to sell? Circumstances over which, alas, I had no control, have brought me up against this curious fact scores of times, and I am still casting around for a satisfying explanation. Is it pride fighting a losing battle with necessity? Or is it just sheer indolence and acquisitiveness.

I overheard an amusing dialogue between the Duchess and the dustman's wife. The price of a lady's hat was at issue between them. "Sixpence," said the Duchess. "Tuppence," said the dustman's wife. "Sixpence," persisted the Duchess graciously. "Sixpence!" snorted the dustman's wife indignantly, "I calls it profiteering, I does! You can pay sixpence for your Sunday 'at, and your 'usband doesn't wipe the floor wif you, 'e doesn't! But my ole man would fair murder me, and small blime to 'im, I says! Tuppence for the 'at!" It changed hands for a threepenny bit; and on Sunday the dustman's lady queened it proudly in her fashionable headwear, with a pair of elastic-sided boots (formerly the property of a decayed gentlewoman), and a "dolman" which My Lady of the Manor sported half a century ago.

Another clerical friend tells me of a "Jumble" his wife organised many years ago in a little Highland village which was populated mainly by English quarrymen and their families. It was a tremendous success. Articles of wearing apparel had come tumbling in from all the country houses and shooting lodges in the district; and on the following Sunday morning the church was crowded with the most fashionably dressed congregation ever seen within its walls. A fat old stonecutter, wearing a starched collar two sizes too large for him, a frock coat two sizes too small for him, and patent leather boots two sizes too tight for him, tip-toed to a front pew, accompanied by his wife in an elegant afternoon tea-gown that trailed half a yard behind her. Then came the son of the house, dressed in an Eton suit and carrying in one hand a Malacca cane and in the other a cricket cap which had once adorned the curly head of a youthful peer who is now a lord of high renown. All this splendour spoiled the day for old Bill 'Awkins, who had hied forth to divine worship in the Duke of ——'s riding breeches, with boots and spurs "accordin'," and, giddily perched on the back of his head, a narrow-brimmed silk hat that had belonged to a scion of the house of Breadalbane. My friend says that when he gave out the opening hymn he felt like choking. It was "O Lord of Heaven!"

I like "Jumbles;" but I can never find anything at them that is of the slightest use to me. The breeks are invariably too short or too long, or too slack or too tight; the boots have either elastic sides or tackety soles, and I dislike both; the bowler hats have such a rakish look that I should be unfrocked for wearing them, even if my wife would let me; and I am not attracted by other people's underwear. I have no use for pots and pans and odd pieces of linoleum; and oleographs of Queen Victoria and Albert the Good would jar on the sensitive minds of the Old Masters who hang about my private gallery. But the people—the wifies and the weans, the auld 'ins and the young 'ins, the garrulous ones and the "lydies" who merely sniff: they are priceless and delightful, and I would put up with a good many different smells for the privilege of mixing with them, watching their bargaining, listening to their chaffering. I can enjoy this kind of joyousness for quite ten minutes at a stretch.

But as a means of raising money for the kirk? Ah! Did the Apostles sell old boots or their equivalents? Did that cloak of Paul's go to a rummage sale at Troas, after all? Was Dorcas an enthusiastic jumbler? There are worse ways of making money for Church purposes. I don't agree that whist drives and dances are wrong in principle; but they strike me as an extraordinarily undignified

and unbecoming way of replenishing the exchequer of the Church of God. Compared with either of these expedients, the "Jumble," has a good deal to say for itself. But there is something rotten in the State of Denmark when clergy of all denominations are compelled to resort to these rather cheap and sometimes offensive devices to get oil for the machinery they are expected to operate. It is, in my opinion, a degradation of their office; and I am not surprised that young men are refusing to enter a calling which, while aiming at nothing less than the conversion of the world, is forced by the niggardliness of professing Christians to adopt methods of financing its work that an outside broker would look upon with scorn.

This Jolly Old World.

This Jolly Old World.

IS not this, papa, a very delightful and perfectly wonderful old world? Yes, indeed, Hubert; a great thinker has asked us to pause in the midst of our mad pleasures, and reflect on the awful truth that we should probably find some difficulty in getting along without it.

Thousands of weird people, mostly earnest little men with fierce whiskers, are running around with hatchets and sticks of dynamite, chopping down and blowing up all sorts of things that were once supposed to be as inviolable as the skies; but no one has yet hit upon a really workable plan for abruptly splitting old Mother Earth in twain, and sending the parts thereof hurtling "beyond the flaming ramparts of the world" into desolate, wind-swept space. Though life may be for many of us, as it was for Mr. Mantilini, a "dem'd horrid grind," I doubt if it would be one whit more comfortable were we compelled to go whirling through the ether with our legs dangling over the saucer-edge of a disrupted world, spinning round and round for ever in a thoroughly vicious circle. Better to bear the ills we have than try to get rid of them by an expedient of which

the Convention of Royal Burghs, with its usual commonsense, would unanimously disapprove.

Let us pursue this matter calmly, with the grace of gentlemen and the open-mindedness of philosophers. Blair's Chronology, once famous and revered, tells us that Adam and Eve were created on Friday, 28th October, B.C. 4004; and we are at liberty to choose between a perfectly definite statement of fact for which Mr. Gradgrind would have been grateful and the eerie generalisation of modern scientists, who assure us that six hundred million years have elapsed since our planetary system edged its way out of the primordial darkness into the first faint flush of universal day. The discrepancy is considerable; but it leaves me untroubled, serenely loyal to whatsoever gods I own. In the last analysis, it does not matter a wag of dog Toby's tail whether the world was created yesterday or the day before; whether it sprang into being full-orbed, full-formed, at the fiat of the Eternal Mind, or just "growed," like Topsy and the British Constitution. The crucial fact is that at one supreme moment in time its mammoth frame shook and shivered and trembled into life; and of such vast significance was this miracle of earth-consciousness that the stars of the morning sang together and all the sons of God shouted for joy. That was the earth's baptism of gladness; gladness, which is her heritage and that of the children who cling to her bosom.

All the shams and corruptions of the ages cannot destroy the essential lovableness of a world that was born not in sorrow but in song. We are blind to this at times, as all men everywhere are blind to some aspect of beauty that awes their neighbours into reverence; as Monsieur Leconte de Lisle, for example, was blind to the glories of the Middle Ages. You will remember how, in his delightful essay on de Lisle, Anatole France tries to open his great compatriot's eyes to the precious and immortal things that had eluded the poet's vision, and were lost to a heart that would have loved them passionately had it known a tithe of their splendour and their graciousness. Thousands of scattered images of the life of his fathers glittered and tossed themselves hither and thither before the critic's imagination. He saw sublime artisans who built cathedrals without even handing down their names; he saw monks who were also sages, for they lived in retirement, book in hand, "in angello cum libello"; he saw theologians, amid the subtleties of scholasticism, follow after a superior ideal; he saw a king and his knighthood guided by a shepherd girl. In a word, he saw everywhere the holy things of labour and of love, the hives full of bees and honeycombs; and he cried, "Be ye blessed, my fathers; be ye blessed in your works which have prepared ours; be ye blessed in your sufferings, which have not been fruitless; be ye blessed even in the

errors of your courage and of your simplicity!" Get behind the shadows of the Middle Ages, and you are face to face with unsung heroisms and grave nobilities; rise for one tremulous instant above the clouds of life, and you will be lost—as the whole creation was lost when this tiny atom of a world burst in all its shimmering loveliness into space and time—"in wonder, love, and praise." I am not a facile optimist who has deluded himself into believing that everything is for the best in this best of all impossible worlds; there are spots on the sun and holes probably in your stockings, and I am quite sure—because I happen to know—that there are men and women so embittered by life's cheateries that they are tempted to commit the great apostasy, and curse God and die. But I keep reminding myself of Walt Whitman's apparently boastful words, "Do I contradict myself? Very well, I contradict myself. I am large—I contain multitudes." One poor wretched creature, who lived in the glare and died in the gloom, said, thinking of himself, as he always did, "Somehow life is bigger after all than any painted angel, could we see the God that is within us." Whitman and Wilde were for once on the same hill-top, preaching the same evangel. Man is so great that he may still endure life's wretchedness and be glad; there is within him a spirit that impels him to stand upright amid his miseries, and throw himself "against the flaming

ramparts of the world," happy at least in the knowledge that, though he fail, his manhood will endure. We are large, we contain multitudes; the good Lord made us both for laughter and for tears.

Because he refuses to be Mr. Cheeryble, nice people amuse themselves by calling Dean Inge naughty names. I am sure that this man with the rapier mind does not care a straw what dullards say of him, and that he will keep on making mince-meat of the moral and intellectual fallacy that the march of human progress is as irresistible, as inevitable, as the upward sweep of the morning sun. If it were, the world would be peopled, not by frail humans, feeding their souls on faith and hope and love, but by a race of infallible and inerrant supermen—sublime nonentities whose splendour would lie in their abjectness, great merely because in themselves they were so little and so mean. In such a world all the gladness of life would be dead, because the heart of man would know nothing of the joys that lie deep in the wells of human nature, the joy of the mysteries that await us at every corner of the road, the joy of creative suffering, of frustration and achievement.

I love the world as it is because of its uncertainties, its throw-backs, its falls and failures and uprisings, the haunting shadows by the burn-side, and the blazing crown of glory on the hills. Childish thoughts? Pooh! Wasn't it Stevenson who said that

justice was not done to the versatility and unplumbed childishness of man's imagination? His life from without may seem but a rude mound of mud; but there will always be some chamber at the heart of it in which even a meat-salesman may dwell delighted. For though a meat-salesman cannot possibly be a superman, he may, if he would, ride into the brave foray of life with that gallant company of shining souls, the Squires of the Eternal Wisdom.

Yes, Hubert, it is a jolly old world. Be glad you are a little bit of its ferment. Don't shirk, don't fear; don't bottle up your happiness until it is soured. "It would be a pity to die and leave no laughter and singing behind us!"

The Bishop's Bowers.

The Bishop's Bowers.

MY bishop says everyone should have a hobby, which is true. His hobby is gardening; mine is painting pictures with a pen. If the world were asked to make its choice between the Bishop's hobby and mine, I think mine would win. I say this in no spirit of empty pride; on the contrary, I say it with bowed head and quivering frame. For the world, on the whole, is rather asinine. It never loved gardening, never in its history. Our forefather Adam might have established a sound tradition had he been given half a chance; but what the Bishop calls "the indiscretion of his wife" sent all his plans agley, and from that moment down to the present time, gardening has been the exclusive pursuit of a few choice souls in whose memory there still lingers something of the fragrance of the roses of Eden. None but they can enter into the holy places where the "chalic'd flowers" catch the tears of the angels and give them back in diamond clusters to the sun; none but they are unscathed by the flaming sword which keeps the way of the tree of life. They are the priests and priestesses of Nature at its simplest, its purest, and its best; and the things that they see and hear and

know are full of the mystery of eternity and the beauty of childhood's dreams.

There is something wistful about the people's love of flowers. In the meanest streets of any large town in Scotland you will find pathetic little pot plants which are tended sometimes with more care than the bodies of the bairns; certainly with more understanding than their souls. Once in a squalid court in the east-end of Glasgow, I found in the window-sill of a wretched home a miniature garden of glory. The "house" was a tiny attic; for a table there was an upturned box, for a chair a couple of bricks, for a bed a worn and evil-looking mattress on the floor. And on the mattress, dead drunk, lay the lady of the home, a woman of education, and once a person of refinement and repute. She had two passions—a passion for bulbs and a passion for brandy. The brandy ruined her; the bulbs played their part in her redemption. I knew a convict who smuggled a rose-leaf into his cell, and preserved it during all the years of his imprisonment.

"Ah, yes," said a friend to whom I related the incident, "reminded him of the outside world, no doubt!" But my friend was wrong. This particular convict had no wish to be reminded of the outside world; the outside world had not been very kind to him, and he hated it. He treasured the rose-leaf for what some people will regard as a perfectly ridiculous

reason—just because it was a rose-leaf, something that had lost its way. "There's a pair of us in like case," he remarked, "and the rose-leaf is the finer article of the two. It was beautiful, and it fell, and now it's in jail; but it is still a part of the life of God." Convicts are like that sometimes; they have queer thoughts which we, the free and impeccable, would be ashamed to own.

My Bishop, I gather, is himself something of a "working gardener"; and manifestly that is as it should be. I can conceive of no more soothing relaxation for one who is engaged in the nerve-wracking task of overseeing the Church and the ministers thereof. Pot plants don't argue; hyacinths have no opinions on the damnatory clauses of the Athanasian Creed; jonquils are absolutely indifferent to the scandal of the poorer clergy; and chrysoloræ would merely smile if you talked to them about the higher criticism. More than most men, I should imagine, a Bishop needs to keep himself alive to the fact that God is not exclusively interested in these things. He was a wise old prelate who pointed out that "the 'bon Dieu' is not a Churchwarden 'in excelsis'." My Bishop does not need the reminder; he is so bravely, buoyantly human that a cassock cannot encase his soul or a mitre the joyous imaginings of his mind. But there are some aspects of Church work that are spiritually deadening; and in his

garden, among the myriad and marvellous things that Nature weaves with such exquisite artistry, the Bishop may balance calmly, not merely a pruning hook, but the issues of life itself, and learn more of God and His ways with men than is possible even at a vestry meeting or a solemn Convocation of the whole Episcopate.

Here, perhaps, we may find the secret of this Bishop's broad, generous, and understanding tolerance, which has made him "a man beloved" not by one communion only, but by all, and has enabled him to teach us, with so much charm and eloquence, that as it takes all kinds of flowers to make a garden, so it takes all kinds of people to make a world, and all kinds of folk to build the Church of Him whose choicest name is the "Rose of Sharon, the Lily of the Valley, the Altogether Lovely."

Once when I confided to a snuffy old Scots gardener that I "was fond of flowers," he stunned me with his candour. "Ye're a leear," he said; "if ye war' fond o' them ye wad gr-r-row them!" That was hardly fair. I am fond of clothes, but I do not make them; of pictures, but I do not paint them; of green canaries, but I do not breed them. Possibly I could do all these things if I tried, but I should do them very badly; and so far, as I know to my cost, my modest attempts at horticulture have been the delight of my enemies and the humiliation of my

friends. You see, I am not of the elect; such things are too wonderful for me, and all I can do is stand humbly aside, and feast my eyes on the beautiful creations that finer hands have reared—

> "The rathe primrose that forsaken dies,
> The tufted crow-toe, and pale jessamine,
> The white pink, and the pansy freak'd with jet.
> The glowing violet,
> The musk-rose, and the well attir'd woodbine."

These lines, long forgotten, leapt suddenly into my mind one evening in the late summer, after a visit to a wonderful rock-garden. The place almost stunned me with its beauty. From every angle of vision it shone with a rare grace—modestly here, over there with the splendour of a sapphire and all the emeralds. One by one the attendant minister called them by their names; and I loved the names because there was magic in the sound of them, and the resonance of a great age which lives in the melody of its speech. But I could not grow one of those flowers to save my life. And I do not want to grow them. I want only to have the honour of walking in their gracious company.

It is a noble imagery which pictures Paradise as God's pleasaunce, with terraced slopes and jewelled meadows, and winding paths amid the glories "where roses and white lilies grow"; and it is tended lovingly, I often think, by those from whose hearts has arisen the fragrance of kind thoughts, and whose lives have blossomed with the grace of gentle ministries.

Plato as Rectorial Candidate.

Plato as Rectorial Candidate.

THE announcement that Plato is now a candidate for the Lord Rectorship of our ancient University has naturally created widespread, indeed almost national, interest. Most of the London newspapers have made incidental, and invariably adverse, comments in the nomination. "The Times" is "gravely doubtful whether Mr. Plato's appearance on the scene at this late hour of the day has not in it an element of unfairness which the other nominees may justifiably resent;" the "Morning Post" feels that "Herr Plato has none of those sound English characteristics which are naturally looked for in anyone who aspires to represent the best minds of a Scottish university;" and the "Daily Mail" warns its readers against "this subtle attempt on the part of a Minority Movement to cast the glamour of academic distinction over its disruptive utopian imbecilities by means of which a retrogressive party of criminal reactionaries hopes to march forward through rapine to the dismemberment of the Empire." Scottish opinion is divided, which is what one expects in a country where the spirit of independent thinking has not been crushed into splinters under the iron heel of Tory squires or reduced to pulp by the malign influence

of obscurantist ecclesiastics. Here are a few pregnant thoughts, culled from a variety of sources:—

> The "Glasgow Herald": "Plato is impossible. He can make no contribution to our knowledge of the Scots vernacular."
>
> The "Scotsman": "Plato is doubtless a scholar of some eminence; but his acquaintance with modern Greek is so limited that he would be utterly unintelligible to the Scottish Education Department."
>
> The "Glasgow Record": "Bah!"
>
> The "Scots Observer": "The acid test is Dr. Plato's attitude to the Shorter Catechism, and by this test he fails. There is nothing in his writings to show that he has any knowledge of the Reformation, any sense of the significance of the Disruption, or any real acquaintance with the history of Scottish Presbyterianism."
>
> Mr. C. M. Grieve: "Has Plato ever seen a drunk man looking at a thistle? Never! Therefore, I say, he is no true Scot."
>
> Mr. John Buchan: "Undoubtedly a remarkable thinker and a very brilliant writer; but he knows nothing whatever about the difficulties of publishing as a profession."
>
> The "Auchtermuchty Tribune": "Hoots, man!"
> The Man in the Street: "Plato? Fa's he?"

There you are! As has been thoughtfully observed, we are a great people.

Aberdeen judges the issue in the light of pure reason. It sweeps aside all specious arguments, and asks the blunt question—"What are this man's qualifications for the exalted office to which he aspires?" The answer is given that he is a great intellectual

leader, and a philosophical thinker of no mean ability. This is interesting, but it is a mere begging of the question. What has a university to do with intellectual leadership? and who cares a rap for philosophy, except Professors of Philosophy, concerning whom there is really nothing more to be said? What we want to know is Dr. Plato's views on the currency, on land reform, on the nationalisation of all the means of production and exchange, on the League of Nations and the Protocol, on the Trade Disputes Act, and on the sanctity (or otherwise) of Empire Free Trade? What is his agricultural policy? Will the "flapper vote," in his judgment, make for righteousness or the ruination of Crown and Constitution? Has he considered the possibilities of the Russian herring market? On the answer to these questions we shall judge his fitness or unfitness to be Lord Rector of the University of Aberdeen.

Let me make the matter perfectly clear. What is a University? It is a seat of learning. What is learning? Ah, there's the rub! Once we had our standards in Scotland. "Learning" and the "humanities" were synonymous terms. There was a straight line drawn between the scholar and the bagman. The man of learning was a man of letters. He loved the ancients, spoke their tongue, imbibed their spirit, dreamed their dreams, and saw their visions. If he amused himself by playing at politics,

he could do so with the comforting thought at the back of his mind that the Humanities were strong enough to take care of themselves, and great enough to reassert their charm over heart and mind. To-day all this is changed. Scholastically, we "dunno where we are." We have degenerated into things of shreds and patches; and politics, instead of being a "game," is fast becoming one of the main businesses of life, challenging the old scholarly sanctities at every turn. And for this reason Plato, if he were a candidate for the Lord Rectorship of almost any of our universities, would stand no more chance of election against a political "gunman," of either of the three great parties—except possibly at St. Andrews—than I would, were any one silly enough to nominate me on the ground of my intimate knowledge of the intricacies of bee-culture or the bone-building qualities of dill-water.

By-and-by, when they get sick of the jazz cantrips of political fuglemen, our young academics will recollect that their first loyalty is to learning: to poetry, literature, and the arts; to science in all its variegated and entrancingly interesting forms. Perceiving that the supreme peril of the age lies in its passion for utilitarianism, a facile social philanthropy, and a mawkish sentimentality, they will reassert the divine dignity of the things of the mind; and fidelity to culture, which is never trashy, and not

to caucuses, which are always terrible and mean, will dominate their thinking and direct their choice. Meanwhile, I advise my friend Plato, if anyone asks him the colour of his party ticket, to follow the example of John Ruskin, and reply, "What in the devil's name have YOU to do with that?"

Where the Rainbow Ends.

Where the Rainbow Ends

THERE is a jar of gold where the rainbow ends; and nice people have rather astonished me by finding in this thought something to make them extraordinarily happy. There are gleams of the Orient in the heart of the most reserved and phlegmatic Scot; and the jar and the gold and the wonderful spot where the rainbow ends, conjure up an idea of mystery and beauty which is capable of bewitching the imagination of a Stoic. It is doubtless a sacred jar, fashioned by the gods, planted by the fairies, and watched over by the cherubim with flaming swords who guard the gates of Paradise; the gold is the hallowed fragrances of all the loveliness of earth and sea and sky, the glittering essence of everything in the created universe that has sweetened life, and given splendour to its simplicities; and the foot of the rainbow rests on the canopy of a Great White Throne.

All this, of course, as I shall be told, is childish day-dreaming—a folly from which a little knowledge of science would save me, and indulgence in which is symptomatic of an impracticable, emotional mind. But I plead for a little childishness in this very old and sophisticated world. Is there a

grown-up man among us who does not regret the lost illusions of the radiant days when everything in life was new and strange and wonderful? When the fleecy clouds were the wings of angels, and fairies danced gaily across the meadows and down the glens, and the stars were jewels on the breastplate of the Eternal? Children have always dreamed these dreams; but even the children are becoming so wise in the wisdom of the world that the wisdom of the ages is falling from them, and I can envisage a time when the instinct of wonder, which is their birthright, will be lost, and they will be born as little scientists or little philosophers or little political economists, or anything you can think of, except little children. The Registrar-General's "Vital Statistics" will then make curious reading. They will tell us, probably, that the number of scientists born in Scotland during the past twelve months was 10.5 per cent. in excess of the preceding year; and the newspapers a century hence will announce that though the birth-rate of moral philosophers has gone up by 12.9 per cent., the figures for the seven largest Scottish towns show a gratifying increase in the number of stockbrokers and income-tax assessors born during the same period. Satisfaction will be expressed at the growing number of Fellows of the Society of Antiquaries (Scot.) born in Aberdeen, distillers at Perth, jute-spinners at Dundee, advocates and retired clergymen at Edinburgh, and

hole-borers, draughtsmen, and boilermakers on Clyde-side. In the following issue of the "Contemporary Review," Professor Schneiderheim, one of the most distinguished Englishmen of his time, will write a learned article showing how the complete disappearance of ancient superstitions has simplified the machinery of life and enhanced its efficiency to an unexampled degree.

It has always been difficult to draw the line between credulity and faith; but it is better to be credulous than sterilely unbelieving. It is better to believe in fairies than in obese financiers; it is better to believe in God than in Professor Schneiderheim. Indeed, I go further and say that belief in the obese financier and Professor Schneiderheim makes a call upon the credulity of intelligent people which in their heart of hearts they resent even more keenly than the worship of Mumbo-Jumbo. After all, Mumbo-Jumbo has some tradition behind him; but the oracular Schneiderheim and the obese financier have nothing behind them but the flummery of intellectual showmanship in the one case, and the debased art of thimble-rigging in the other. Putting it on the lowest grounds, I say it is easier to believe in the fairies and in God than in either of these products of an "enlightened" age—neither of them beautiful, and both contemptible. But the charm of the fairies and the beauty of God—why, one sees their pure whiteness gleaming through the obscurities of the ages.

Much nonsense is talked about "the decay of superstition," or what very superior persons call superstition. There will never be a time when "superstition" shall have departed from the face of the earth, for there never will be a time when the faith of one man is not the unfaith of another, or when the thing that is sun-clear to the mind of Jones is not mere clouded lunacy in the judgment of Robinson. There are two conceptions of life and thought now striving for the mastery—one catholic, the other coldly material; and I believe the catholic ideal is going to win. In using the word "catholic" I am not thinking specially of any Church, but of that broad, warm, fertilising stream of faith which for illimitable ages has nurtured the lives of man. The stream becomes clearer as it broadens out in its unerring progress to the sea, and on its waters are many argosies laden with hope and belief and love. Pennants are flying, sails are burgeoning, as tall ships and little ships, stately barges and homelier craft, pass by; and the voyagers are evidently a joyous brotherhood, for the sound of their music and their laughter reaches the shore. This annoys the steely-eyed men who are either dining and wining Professor Schneiderheim (that noble Englishman) or are hot in pursuit of the obese financier. To them, all faith is superstition, all vision blindness: all the invisibilities a bundle of imbecile nonsense; all the

sublime majesties of ancient thought, a tale told by an idiot, signifying nothing.

I don't know where the rainbow ends. Perhaps it never ends. Perhaps it winds itself round and round the earth like a riband of silver and gold, a sign of the encompassing beauty of Truth. Even Professor Schneiderheim and the obese financier are within the safe harbourage of its encircling arms. It stands for just those things of which they know less than the littlest child—for the mystery and wonder of the natural world and the mystery and wonder of the Creative Mind: for the pricelessness of Beauty, and the immeasurable privilege of being a live speck of protoplasm in a universe of deathless splendours. Were you to speak of these things to Professor Scheneiderheim and the obese financier they would look at you in amazement, and hurry off to report you to the Commissioners in Lunacy. But speak of them in simple words to the children and to the men and women who have kept their hearts young and their minds open to the sun and the winds of the morning, and you will need no interpreter, and every syllable will have significance and beauty and power.

It will need eternity, I suppose, to spell out the whole meaning of faith, and explore all the avenues it opens up to the adventurous spirit. But already, if we hold to our illusions, we may share in the joy of knowledge and achievement.

My Pet Aversions.

My Pet Aversions.

MOST people have at least one pet aversion. I have many; and this might reasonably be interpreted as proof of chronic ill-nature, or of a mind "sodden with infirmities," but for the fact that my aversions are chiefly impersonal. There are three types of "bifurcated animals in feathers" whom we all detest—cads, bullies, and sycophants; and apart from these, I think I can lay my hand on my heart and say that in surveying (not too closely) the foibles and follies and lunatic passions that have woven themselves into the texture of human life, I am one of the most tolerant of men.

Here is a little list of the things I specially dislike. There are many others; but these are particularly obnoxious:—

Top hats;
Frock coats;
Striped waistcoats;
Umbrellas;
Black gloves;
Patent-leather boots;
Side-whiskers;
Walrus Moustasches;
Gold alberts; and
Cold tea.

A glance at this list reveals that my pet aversions are all, with one exception, articles of personal "adornment." I quote the last word because I resolutely deny, and shall keep on denying to my dying day, that there is so much as a scintilla of beauty in any one of these things. Test the matter for yourself. If you want a scarecrow for your back garden, dress it up in the garments catalogued above, mount a pair of side-whiskers or a walrus moustache, and you will have at your service an apparition which will not only scare the crows, but put the fear of death into all the tramps, gangrel bodies, book-canvassers, politicians, gas inspectors, rate-collectors, and up-lift agents who infest your neighbourhood. Yet this is the garb in which ordinarily sensible people parade our streets, invade our offices, stalk brazenly into our studies, and have the cold effrontery to sit down in our drawing-rooms. Small wonder that we are rapidly becoming a nation of pessimists!

Is there anything in the whole world more utterly hopeless and depressing than a walrus moustache? One look at it, and you feel that the bottom has fallen out of life. Your first impulse is to knock down a policeman; and any psycho-analyst will tell you that this is the out-flow of your sub-conscious desire to destroy a civilisation which has given birth to such a monstrous example of depraved humour, bad taste, and futurist art. But combine

the walrus moustasche with the silk topper! Heavens! All that is left to you is to forsake the world, and join the Philosophical Society.

I forget at the moment whether or not Mr. Pecksniff had side-whiskers. If not, Dickens was singularly remiss. "Let's be merry," said Mr. Pecksniff. "Here he took a captain's biscuit." You chuckle; but that is because you instinctively visualise a side-whiskered Pecksniff. Without the appanage natural to the character of the man, your mental picture of Pecksniff is foreshortened, and you begin to doubt whether Dickens was the great artist you had imagined him to be. I willingly admit that many otherwise excellent people affect these articles of vertu. That is because they hug the fond delusion to their hearts that side-whiskers give them an aspect of benevolence. As a matter of fact, they impart to them merely an aspect of antiquity and tip-toe piety. And the reaction on their mentality must be deplorable. No great poet, no eminent scientist, no distinguished playwright or man of letters, ever wore these mossy bifurcations. Had Mr. Shaw been a Dundreary addict, he would probably be a minor writer on the staff of the Religious Tract Society; and, given the same conditions, Mr. Chesterton would be going up and down the country soliciting orders for family mausoleums. As for Charles Murray, I conjure up (with much difficulty) a picture of him in

silk hat, frock coat, black gloves, and side-whiskers, meandering through the Vale of Alford composing "Bedside Rhymes for Tiny Tots," or "How a Good Little Herd-Boy won a Blue-Eyed Gollywog." For which he would have got neither his LL.D. nor the slightest attention from Mr. C. M. Grieve.

I have a theory—it may be wrong, but it is arguable—that the Conservative Party lost the 1929 election because it is hopelessly thirled to nearly every one of my pet aversions. (I absolve them from any passion for cold tea; nor is Mr. Baldwin implicated in this charge. He is the despair of every journeyman tailor in the land). Labour, on the other hand, won because it has nothing to do with any of these abominations. Hodden grey appeals to hodden grey; black vicuna is unintelligible to corduroy. Carlyle's "Sartor Resartus" was a metaphysical attempt to prove that all matter and all material things are but the vesture of spirit; and this was regarded in his day as a tremendous discovery, though it was merely a reflection of the thought of Kant and Sir William Hamilton. The truth is that Carlyle was reasserting a universal and age-long truth; a truth which modern democracy has learned without any guidance from the philosophers. I should like to see an analysis made of the attire in which the successful Conservative candidates conducted their last campaigns. It would be an eye-opener, I believe,

to those who are getting ready to sit down and scoff at this temerarious dash into a dangerous terrain. Be it noted, I am not discussing politics, but clothes.

As for umbrellas, striped waistcoats, and patent-leather boots, I would reserve these for night policemen. Then nobody would see them—except in duplicate—and serve the wassailers right, I say!

The Poet of Innercraig.

The Poet of Innercraig.

LANG Alec is a man o' wecht in "Bonnie Innercraig." He is the village "poet," and an authority on so many abstruse subjects that in the fierce light of his omniscience the schoolmaster's erudition glimmers like an ineffectual taper at high noon. Alec's opinion of the dominie is cold, candid, and cutting. "Yon loon!" quo' he. "Man, he doesna ken th' difference atween a haddie and a dog-fish; an' he's stark ignorant o' th' fundamental preenciples o' relativity. But fat can ye expec'? He was born at Boddam, and brocht up at Faithlie, and eddicated at Aiberdeen; and a mixture o' that kin' reminds me o' my midder's rag-bag—fu' o' patches an' aul' breeks an odds an' ends that are braw enouch to look at, but are fit for nothin' in parteeclar!"

Anywhere but in Innercraig, Lang Alec's inveterate self-opinionativeness would provoke to wrath the mildest mannered man that ever scuttled ship; but in our little community it has won for him not only fame but the earnest of immortality. When he dies, his name will be embedded in our history; and long after the present race of Innercraigians are a-mouldering in the graves, his memory will be

treasured, his learning extolled, and his wisdom enshrined in the traditions of the elders. For we are born dogmatists in Innercraig; it is part of our heritage, and we say "Shibboleth" in the same way, with the same accent and the same intonations as the "rude forefathers of the hamlet" who, long generations ago, laid the foundations of our communal life. Not, mark you, that we are "ferocious flaunters of thrice-sacred truth———"

> "Or raging, taring, ramping saints
> Who clamour like a bell,
> And shoot you boldly up to Heaven,
> Or tramp you down to hell!"

Ours is a placid certainty, based on a serene assurance of our own inerrancy; and herein we differ from the feckless folk in the neighbouring town of Broadbent, who mistake the new for the true and brazed brass for hammered gold. This is why we not only tolerate Lang Alec, but love and honour him. He incarnates all our traditions, and has never been known to commit the almost unpardonable sin of attempting to qualify the absolute.

The dominie is an irascible body whose peppery temper is aided and abetted by a caustic tongue; and when he so far forgot himself as to refer to Lang Alec as "an illiterate slinger of imbecilic rhymes," he found public opinion arrayed sturdily against him. A deputation waited upon the minister to demand the schoolmaster's immediate dis-

missal on the ground that "a man fa could use sic awfu' language wasna fit to be entrusted wi' th' Christian eddication and upbringin' o' th' bairns o' Innercraig," all of whom, his reverence was further assured, were the offspring of pious parents and "examples to th' hail kintryside." When this drastic measure failed, Lang Alec called on me, looking very grave. "Man," he said, "I'm no' a veendictive person; but we are taught in th' Gweed Buik that sinners canna escape the consequentialities o' their wickedness, an' yon loon must be punished for his profane babbling."

"Alec," I suggested, "yon loon is a schoolmaster; isn't that punishment enough?"

"That's jist the pint," said Alec shrewdly. "If he werna a skweelmaister nobody wad heed a word the body said; but we are taught in the Gweed Buik that accordin' to oor talents so shall we be judged, and a skweelmaister should be a licht in th' darkness to guide th' footsteps o' th' godly, and not a stone o' stumblin', an' a rock o' offence in the pathway o' th' just."

"Then, my dear Alec, leave him in the hand of the Lord."

"Oh, aye, I'll do that richt enouch; but as a humble instrument o' th' Lord it is my business to chastise him for his unfaithfulness. Na," he added, as he saw my look of startled protest. "I winna lay

my finger on th' craitur; but I am a poet, as ye ken, and I'll use th' gift that th' gweed Lord has given me to cover him wi' ridicule as wi' a cloak. Hearken ye!" and he began—

There's a wee, wee dominie in oor toon,
Wi' hardly a hair on th' tap' o' his croon,
A coat that's green whaur it isna broon,
An' shachley feet in shachley shoon—
Oor ill-faured dominie!

Fra Boddom he went to th' Broch to skweel,
An' then he dawdled through college as weel,
An' there th' professors, wi' wunnerfu' skeel,
Declared "He is senseless fra heid to heel;"
An' they sent him here—an ill-natured feel—
Oor ill-faured dominie!

Alec paused, and waited for my praise. "Not bad," I said, "but abusive."

The poet looked grave. "Man," he whispered, "ha'e ye forgotten fat the Gweed Buik says—'With what measure you mete withal it shall be measured to you again.' Th' dominie maun get fat he gave; and I didna get a wink o' sleep last night, makkin' th' rhymes to clink and polishin' th' sting in th' tail. But maybe ye'll like this better. I dashed it aff afore sayin' my prayers yestreen." And impressively he declaimed—

Here lies a teacher fa' on earth
Had neither faith nor creed;
He taught the bairns o' saints, an', oh,
He taught them ill indeed!
But since he lies aneath th' sod
I fain wad wish him weel,
Though noo, I'm feart, he's teachin' in
Anither kind o' skweel!

I laughed, and Alec left me, evidently satisfied that an epitaph that "gars ye grin" is a work

of art well worthy of wide publicity. He copied the lines for the benefit of his cronies; before nightfall they were in every house in the village; and next day the children were singing them in the street to a stately psalm tune, which the dominie listened to first with wonder and then with a baleful light in his eyes that boded ill for somebody. He dashed from the schoolhouse and, rounding the corner, ran into the arms of his antagonist. "Ha!" he raved, "you illiterate rhymster! You brainless manufacturer of drivelling imbecilities! You—you——" and thought deserted him, words failed him, coherency departed.

"Ye dinna like my epitaph?" cooed Alec. "Never mind, sir, I'll write anither ane, and maybe it'll please you better." And he did. Here it is—

Ken ye fa lies aneath this stane?
I dinna want it mentioned;
For though I didna like the loon,
I'm really weel intentioned.
The dominie? Aye, that's the lad:
When death stapped by an' met him
We laid him here, an' carved no name
To mark the hole to which he came,
In kindly hope that Nickey Ben,
Fa's awfu' busy at Broaden',
Wad happily forget him!

The announcement of the schoolmaster's resignation has created no surprise. Lang Alec is delighted, and is evolving a theory which may cause trouble among the higher critics, that "the sword of the Lord and of Gideon" was really the pen of a poet!

Detective-Inspector Pickwick.

Detective-Inspector Pickwick.

OBSERVE Mr. Pickwick. Pay no attention to his alleged antiquarianism. That is sub-Pickwickian. Close your eyes mercifully to his occasional lapses from that standard of strict sobriety. Forget his unfortunate love affair, which would have had a different ending had the advice of a man of the world like Mr. Weller been taken—"Oh, Sammy, Sammy, vy vorn't there an alleby?" Under the deft fingers of his creator, Mr. Pickwick grows in mental power, in moral stature, in quickness of perception, in stability, dignity, and strength of character.

Mr. Chesterton calls him first a fairy, then the Fairy Prince, and then an abstract wanderer and wonderer; but Mr Chesterton is the chartered virtuoso of criticism, and is at liberty to say anything he pleases, so long as he says it pleasingly. I do not know, however, why he should assume that in his earlier years Samuel Pickwick was probably an insufferable young coxcomb. Likelier, is it not, that he was a simple youth, who dreamed ecstatically and grew fat casually, carrying with him into an affluent old age that delightful simplicity which, when allied to the spirit of wonder, is worth all the riches of the

Orient. Dickens at first evil-entreated his own handiwork. He saw a child and drew a simpleton; and a simpleton Pickwick would have been to the end of his days had the child, as children will, however we may dragoon them, not taken a hand in the shaping of his own life, and by his very artlessness compelled the art of his creator to remember his manhood and its dignity. Those of you who have read Edwin Pugh's book, "The Apostle of the People," will recollect how Mr. Pugh first growls in a deep undertone at the almost entire lack of spirituality, of idealism, in the "Pickwick Papers," of its flippant, light-hearted disregard of vital issues, of the blatant subjectivity of its treatment, and the gay, half-cynical carelessness of its pervading tone. Then in the end, as the character of Pickwick unfolds itself, he sees in the creator of this immortal personality—in the creator, mark you, but only through the medium of his creation—the observer, the humorist, the born student of mankind, a big-brained, big-hearted man, who brought to bear upon life a quick and keen insight into its underlying mysteries and a sympathetic knowledge of their meaning. I think this is absolutely true.

It is Dickens you find in Pickwick—Dickens himself, compelled to come in and inhabit the tabernacle he had reared for another: Dickens the man of infinite pity; Dickens with the sorrows of remem-

brance that gave poignancy to his love for the poor, the helpless, the degraded, the miserables of this world: the man who saw and sought and searched and changed. That is Dickens; that is Pickwick—Detective-Inspector Pickwick.

For Pickwick was a great detective, not because of his sense, but because of his sensibility. He was the most gullible detective that ever lived, and the most irresistible; the most simple-minded and the most astute. Through his large, round spectacles he saw a large, round world, full of large, round people like himself who ought to have been very happy but for the fact that some of those globular creatures were merely obscene insects, sucking the life-blood out of the heart of living men. Whether Pickwick realised, as a philosopher, the hideousness of the things he saw, I do not know; but he realised them experimentally—he walked bravely down into the depths of that noisome, sweltering life of cupidity and passion, of ignorance and tortuous villainy, of a social system diseased with avarice and incompetence. He fulfilled his function as a detective by arresting these horrors, by dragging them out of the darkness they loved into the light they hated and feared, and by placing them in all their shameful rags and running sores at the bar of public judgment. If you set out on the study of the "Pickwick Papers" in the same spirit upon which you set out upon a joy-ride

in your new car, you will, of course, be generously rewarded for your courage in embarking upon a perfectly safe adventure; but in this crowded land of ours you cannot joy-ride very far without passing through mean streets, and catching a glimpse at least of the squalor and misery that deface multitudes of lives and defile the honour of mankind.

Travel with Pickwick through the laughing lands, and in the end you will find yourself in jail with him; the comedy, as his biographer puts it, gradually deepening into tragedy; the shabby vagabonds who are the growth of the debtors' prisons contrasting with the poor, simple creatures who are their sacrifices and victims: Mr. Mivins and Mr. Smangle side by side with the cobbler who sleeps under the table to remind himself of his old four-poster; Sam Weller entertaining Stiggins in the snuggery; Jingle in decline; and the Chancery prisoners dying.

Dickens, many years later, marked with pardonable pride the important social improvements that had taken place since " Pickwick " was published. The licence of counsel and the degree to which juries were ingeniously bewildered (as in the Bardell case) were still at that period susceptible of moderation; but legal forms had pared the claws of Dodson and Fogg; and self-respect, education, and co-operation had spread among their clerks; the laws relating to

imprisonment for debt had been altered; and, most signal achievement of all, Fleet Street Prison had been pulled down. "Who knows," added Dickens, "but by the time the series reached its conclusion it may be discovered that there are magistrates in town and country who should be taught to shake hands every day with commonsense and justice; that even Poor Laws may have mercy on the weak, the aged, and unfortunate; that schools, on the broad principles of Christianity, are the best adornment for the length and breadth of this civilised land; that prison-doors should be barred on the outside no less heavily and carefully than they are barred within . . . that a few petty boards and bodies are not for ever to let loose fever and consumption on God's creatures at their will, or always to keep their jobbing little fiddles going for a Dance of Death." There is a cry from the heart; and those who have ears to hear will understand the tremendous distance we have travelled since Dickens as Pickwick went down into the heart of these injustices, and by proclaiming them from the housetop helped to make their persistence impossible in a Christian State.

The Splendour of the Town.

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"THERE is," says Mr. Topham Forrest, "something in the heart of man which responds to the call of the crowded places." This is a graceful way of expressing the old truism that man is a gregarious animal; he has a passion for the companionship of his kind. Not economic laws alone, but the natural instincts of the human heart, have created our great cities, which are in reality so many little townships huddled together in dense mass formation, leaning against each other, sustaining each other: meeting, merging, inter-marrying; working out gradually through the generations the lowest common denominator—or, if you prefer to call it so, the highest common factor—of communal life, until you get the typical citizen, the characteristic, identifiable product of the whole. This man goes about bearing in his body the marks of his origin. He is exactly what the city has made him; and from this standpoint we have some reason to judge our great centres of population not unkindly.

The typical citizen of Glasgow, Edinburgh, Dundee, Perth, and Aberdeen is proud of the hole of the pit out of which he has been digged; proud of

his home town, not so much because of what it has achieved as of what it seems capable of accomplishing. He reflects its ideals, dreams its dreams, embodies its spirit; the forces that shaped him are inciting him silently to reshape them in turn: the past, which is alive in him, reaches out to a future which shall have a new greatness in a larger and happier life of civic fellowship and service.

Poets and prose rhapsodists are the acolytes of nature. They worship her in all her vagrant moods and tenses; for ever they are burning incense at her shrine. Mr C. F. G. Masterman used her as a kind of spearhead in his frequent counter-offensives against the towns. Life with nature, he tells us, in continued contact with the earth, resulted in old times in a stability and occasionally in an elevation of character which seems passing from the fickle, hasty, turbulent life of the modern city; and that, of course, is perfectly true. We know, too, how sometimes in poor and obscure homestead or cottage unlearned and commonplace characters were ennobled by a real spiritual faith in which the trivial events of the daily existence became charged with eternal significance. Life was no longer a convulsive spasm of monotonous toil, but a scene of infinite meaning, and everlasting conflict between God and His enemies. "In such cases," wrote Newman in a famous passage, "every event has its meaning. They (the people)

have their own estimate of what happened to them; they are mindful of times and seasons, and compare the present with the past; and the world, no longer dull, unprofitable, and hopeless, is a varied and complicated drama, with parts, and an object, and an awful moral." All which is true; but it is only one part of the truth, a relatively tiny and insignificant fraction of it. For not "sometimes" or "occasionally," but persistently and with unstinted generosity, the great cities pour out the largess of body, mind, and spirit on the world.

I am a town bird, with a real reverence for the beauty and artistry of Nature; but I had rather talk for five minutes with the meanest of my fellow mortals than bask for an hour in the glory of Schiehallion. This, no doubt, is one sign (among many) of my grievous limitations; but, after all, human nature is a finer thing than a whin bush, and can give points even to a sunset or a primrose by the river's brim. And rural life is not the simple, unaffectedly happy pastoral existence that our poets would have us believe. If it were, the problem of "rural depopulation" would be easily solved. Our novelists find more than "the wind on the heath" and the smell of the heather and the sheen of the hills; they find also drabness and loneliness and narrow thoughts and an infinite pettiness. They find these things because human nature is the same

everywhere; it is not redeemed from the common frailties of the race by walking in a garden of roses. "The House with the Green Shutters" is the story of a small community which was not saved from damnation because it lived "in contact with the earth"; and "Johnny Gibb of Gushetneuk" is the annals of a parish that ought, by every standard of the naturists, to have been a model of gracious thinking and neighbourly simplicity and goodwill. It was the exact opposite.

I am not attacking country life—Heaven forbid!—but merely the assumption, sedulously fostered by a new brand of kailyarders, that one has only to live close enough "to nature" to get rid of all the limitations of the spirit and all the defilements of the world, the flesh, and the devil. In spite of their squalor, their clamour, and their shames, the towns have their own nobilities, and majesties no less alluring than those of the everlasting hills. In them "the warm humanities" serve the earth with mind and sinew and muscle and brawn; in the Street called Diabolus is the sanctity of innocence, and beneath the yoke of labour is the patience of the saints. Here are heroisms of which no poet has sung; philosophies that reach upward till they touch the stars, minds whose fruitful genius recasts the whole fabric of the world's life, teachers and seers at whose word men's hearts kindle into fearlessness. The littlest

and poorest of them help by their humanity to make the city great; some day they will make it the City Beautiful.

The late Sir George Trevelyan once said that the grim alternative to Nature was growing blacker, uglier, noisier, more meaningless every day. I dislike the facile optimism that sees everything in the rich colours of rosy dawn; but if Sir George were alive to-day he would, I believe, think more happily of the city folk whose piteous plight he grieved over. They have at least their dreams, and they are not selfish dreams, but visions of life's enlargement, of broad streets and clear skies, of peaceful homes and loveliness and hearts' content. And I think they have it in them to make their dreams come true.

The Island of Roses.

The Island of Roses.

AN eminent personage has written a book on Rhodes, and a still more eminent reviewer discusses the work in an article graced with the alluring caption, "The Island of Roses." Rhodes has a history for which the epic poet and the modern romanticist should thank the Lord of Battles on bended knee; and grave Atabyris, gazing out of its ancient eyes on the shattered emblems of long-lost splendour, sighs with something of the human sorrow that ponders wistfully on "the glory that was Greece and the grandeur that was Rome." The tragedy of history is not its dead majesties, its kings, its seers, its men of war, but the attempt of each successive generation to make them the puppets of its mind, the ministers of its pleasure; and to apparel the daring spirit and the adventurous heart in the incongruous robes of a spurious chivalry.

But this is away from my point. I should love to write of Rhodes and its ancient magnificence of soul—of Alexander of Macedon, who reigned, and Mithridates the Great, who fell; of "old, unhappy, far-off things, and battles long ago." But what interests me at the moment is not the greatness of shat-

tered dynasties but the happy inspiration of a modern reviewer; for "The Island of Roses" is a phrase which has in it the silence of a thousand nights, and the aroma of the Garden of the Gods. Here we are in this western land and in this century, popping in and out of our granite boxes, toiling up and down our granite stairs, trudging weary miles along our granite streets, and wrestling all the while with flinty facts that break into a thousand splinters, and in the very act of surrender present us with a thousand new problems for the hammer blows of life. On and on we go in the maddening ring of eternal recurrence, until the night cometh when no man can work; and then we exchange our little granite boxes for little beds of clay, and leave the rest of the world to continue as best it can the tiresome route march to eternity. Do you ever feel like that? I do, sometimes—

> "when the fretful stir
> Unprofitable, and the fever of the world,
> Have hung upon the beatings of my heart."

At such a moment I yearn to take dear Fred Locker to my bosom, and say to him:—

> "It is an ugly world! Offend
> Good people, how they wrangle!
> The manners that they never mend,
> The characters they mangle!
> They eat, and drink, and scheme, and plod,
> And go to church on Sunday—
> And many are afraid of God,
> And more of Mrs. Grundy.

In this weary humour I chanced on my headline; and the thought of the granite boxes and the granite streets, and the granite-faced men and women with whom for some great purpose God has congested the world, vanished like craven shadows at the coming of the dawn. In the Island of Roses there are terraced slopes and running waters, and quiet pools that shimmer with the laughter of the skies; soft winds, breathing on the roses, carry their perfume to the shore and pour their sweetness on passing ships at sea. I have never seen my Island of Roses, and it is probably as unlike the island of my imagination as my humdrum experiences of life are unlike the visions of the night; but Shakespeare was right in more senses than one when he said that: "'Tis the mind that makes the body rich" by bearing to it from every corner of the Seven Seas and from all the winds of Heaven argosies of fancy and imaginative joys, stately ships laden with the fragile treasures of our dreams. For the moment, at least, it would be impious to challenge their reality. Indeed, I think they are far more real than the things that weary us, the "facts" of life that torment and dismay. These will pass, but man, who was made for eternity, knows in his soul that his dream-life will never die—that always somewhere for him will be an Island of Roses, where his heart will find peace, and his parched lips be refreshed at the wells of immortality. I am sure Henry Vaughan

spoke with more than man's wisdom when he said that there are times when "some strange thoughts transcend our wonted themes, and into glory peep."

"Stuff and nonsense!" says the Man of the World. Very good, sir. I have never found you wrong, and there are so many of you that your universal rightness almost—almost!—strikes me dumb. You remind me of Brannigan's pig which went barging all over the place so briskly that the poor fellow couldn't count it. I acknowledge what may be called your regional infallibility, and humbly recognise in you the high priest of a utilitarian philosophy which sees in pots, pans, and broom-handles the ministrants of the Proudly Practical, who is the high god of your Pantheon. But permit me to point out that while a world of pots, pans, and broom-handles may fill the pockets, it can never, by any chance, satisfy the amazingly variegated soul of man. King and clod-hopper, merchant prince and crossing sweeper, have as many facets as the planets above your head. All of them, in varying ways and different measure, are squires of the eternal wisdom; and when they hitch their wagon to a star, pots, pans, and broom-handles seem horrible, cheap, and nasty. They are away on a voyage of discovery which the Proudly Practical is too proud to contemplate and too practical to enterprise; they are the apostles of that renaissance of wonder which will one day bring men like little chil-

dren about the feet of God. They are knight-errants (though they would laugh if you told them so) in the Splendid Battle against the "vulgarities and mechanical categories" of a commercialised age; they are, as Dr. Figgis says, "on the side of spirit and freedom against Philistinism and mammon worship." I should like to travel with them if in their journeys they would lead me to the Island of Roses.

I thank my brother of the pen for his fine phrase. For the hundredth time I have learned that words are more than symbols, like ba'bees and three-penny bits; they are at once the sign and the thing signified, for they declare truth and possess it, and, with true sacramental efficacy they pass it on ungrudgingly to the trustful hearts of men. And so the "Island of Roses" is to me and many others not a mere handful of words on a printed page, but a veritable land of pleasantness, a habitation of gentleness and peace.

The Gweed Folk o' Ugieneuk

The Gweed Folk o' Ugieneuk.

MY heart goes out to the unfortunate creatures who never had the joy and blessedness of living in Ugieneuk. The good Lord must, indeed, have been seriously annoyed with them. It is all very well for Christian theologians to deny that worldly happiness or worldly woe is an infallible proof of divine favour or its direct opposite; but they cannot hide the fact that many devout and worthy men who made undying contributions to the religious life of humanity and the literature of the ages, held an entirely opposite opinion, and expressed it with almost passionate earnestness. Speaking for myself, and not for the General Assembly, I have an idea that the Almighty does not bind Himself to reward any man's righteousness with alms, and is above hitting back at a sinner by opening the door to the bailiffs. In other words, the Judge of all the earth gives man his head. The doctrine of self-determination was not invented by an American statesman on the verge of senility; it was not brought into existence for the exclusive benefit of those bugbears of modern civilisation, the "smaller nationalities," who need to be shored up from the outside, and sometimes astonish

their friends and delight their enemies by collapsing bodily from within. Self-determination is as old as Adam; and the poverty-stricken saint whom men despise because they don't see him as a saint but merely as a fool, is day by day shaping his own Heaven, just as surely as the fat humbug with the money-bags who tries to trick God into accepting his oleaginous piety at its face value, is industriously fashioning his own hell. All this seems to have little to do with Ugieneuk. But wait!

No one held you up at the pistol point and compelled you to live at Ugieneuk. It was your own doing; you might have taken a bungalow in the Bermudas had you preferred, or a fisherman's hut on the shores of Largo Bay. But having gone to Ugieneuk and taken out letters of naturalisation, so to speak, as an entered-apprentice free "Neuker," there was a consensus of opinion among the citizenry that there must be something praiseworthy in the character of the man whom fortune had been at pains to honour in this signal way. So they smiled upon you, and took you by the hand, and hoped you would be happy, and inquired kindly after your health, and asked what kirk you thought o' gangin' to, and said they would put your name down for a paper at the Literary Society, and perhaps you wouldn't mind standing for the Town Council at the next election. And were you a teetotaler by any chance? Oh, well, it didn't

matter; lots of people had the quaintest notions nowadays. But didn't you think the town was looking lovely? And you had seen the golf course, no doubt? It was wonderful. So was the town bellman. And the railway station. There were few places in the North of Scotland with a railway station of such historic interest. It and the ruins of the pre-Reformation Church were frequently commented upon by antiquarians; people came long distances to see them. And so on and so forth, until two facts dawned on your inner consciousness—first, that those people loved their town and were proud of it, and, second, that in a queer, indescribable way the town loved its people and found them worthy of all the trust and affection it could offer them. I have never known a community with such a well-defined sense of its personality. It is vividly conscious of its own life, and this makes it sometimes just a little touchy when strangers intermeddle in its affairs. But the "incomer" is never made to feel himself a pariah, as in some places I could name. Ugieneuk is well aware that there are more things in Heaven and earth than have been dreamt of in its philosophy, and it wants to find out what they are. So the stranger is welcomed, not only for his own sake, but because of his romantic possibilities. He may have the golden key that will open an unheard-of treasure house, and, at anyrate, he seems a likely lad; and he will pay

rates, and is probably something of a sportsman; and as he has come to earn his living like the lave, whatever he does will doubtless redound to the glory and honour of Ugieneuk. That is how the communal spirit works. If the stranger proves unworthy of his new citizenship, Ugieneuk leaves him to himself; if he plays the game, even with many stymies, Ugieneuk takes him to its heart, and loads him with kindnesses that make him very humble, and very thankful that Providence has cast his lot in such a pleasant place, and given him the right to share in the life of this wholesome people.

The doctrine of human equality is being preached with more noise than sanity nowadays. "All men are equal;" and only a donkey would bray a flat denial. All men, no doubt, are made of the same clay; all are born of women; all come forth from the unknown and are destined to return to it when their work is done. But they are not equally equal, if you understand my meaning. You would grasp it at once if you had ever lived in Ugieneuk. There are gentle folk in that dear old town, but no "gentry" in the special meaning of the word. I am "class-conscious" enough to believe that this has been a real loss; not simply in a "social" sense, but a loss of something less tangible, yet a hundred times more precious and enduring. Ugieneuk has had to shape its own standards, create its own traditions, formulate

and establish its own code; and it has hammered them out on the anvil of a life of incessant toil. It is a community of workers, a democratic community in which there are no class distinctions, but merely class diversities, social inequalities that have been begotten, not by a snobbish traditionalism—for it is non-existent—but by differences of character, gifts, attainments, and opportunities that are inseparable from the simplest form of community life. Leadership, therefore, is not derivable from social status or bulging money-bags. It belongs by divine right to no section of the people but to all. It springs out of the coins of the truth that all men are not equal; but it is this eternal fact of the inequality of mankind that secures for democracy the right on its merits to a place in the sun. John Tamson's bairns have all an equal right to self-expression, but it is a right that would fall into desuetude were it not that some of the children have a more "wonderful way wid them" than others, and have fortitude, resolution, and character enough to insist that the voice of the family shall be heard. And as Ugieneuk is inhabited almost exclusively by members of this old clan, its courage and resilience in adversity, no less than its sure-footed enterprise in the glad days when the sun is shining, are fairly conclusive proofs of the sanity of democratic control."

If any of my readers are interested in varieties of religious experience, they should spend a month or two in Ugieneuk. No one can complain that the choice of creeds is restricted, for nearly every kind of Christian doctrine, or interpretation of doctrine, is taught there, from the tenets of Close Brethrenism to the dogmas of the Church of Rome; and in the summer months the town is invaded by itinerant gospellers, who make up in lung power what they lack in the subtleties of refined theology. Nearly everybody in Ugieneuk is ticketed and labelled; there is hardly a stray cat in the parish that has not some sort of religious affiliation. Not that the Ugieneukers are "kirk greedy." There was a time, I am told, when the Parish Kirk was crowded to the door, Sunday after Sunday, by a congregation of earnest thinkers who listened delightedly while an eloquent old divine, now gone on the great Voyage of Discovery, demolished, first, the outworks, then the inner walls, and finally the very citadel of hell. An old lady once said to me: "Since the doctor destroyed hell, I havena been quite sure aboot Heaven; and I've bided at hame ever since to think the maitter oot quately for masel'." She is not alone in this; a great many of the nicest people in Ugieneuk are engaged in private study. But I wouldn't have you imagine for a single moment that this lovable old town is in any sense of the word a godless, irreligious community.

The reverse is the case. It may not fill its kirks to over-flowing, Sunday after Sunday, but it will permit no man to speak evil of them, and it lets no charity languish, no good work stand still, for lack of funds. It pays generous homage to "Caritas," the greatest of all virtues, and does so without fuss or ostentation, but simply, unassumingly, as if it were the most natural thing in the world. I have always liked and admired those people since I found out many years ago that beneath a cold, matter-of-fact exterior there were hidden, deep down in the heart of them, great reservoirs of the milk of human kindness which were ready to well over at the call of pity, and very specially when the cry came from the lips of the little children.

This, indeed, is one of the nicest things I know about Ugieneuk. It loves the children. I do not recollect at the moment any other town that can match it in passionate devotion to the "little 'uns." Hear a city father dilate on the "bonnie bairns!" He becomes rapturous, lyrical, just saves himself in time from "dropping into poetry"; and when a Ugieneuker waxes poetical, you may take it that he is stirred from the hat on his head to the soles of his boots. It is a fine thing, this love of children. If for nothing else, I shall remember them always for that—remember them with thankfulness, and with pride in the thought that once I shared in their

simple, homely, honest life, and had, perhaps, a tiny corner somewhere in their affections. Burns must have had tears in his eyes when he wrote the two simplest lines in our literature, immortal lines that have the fragrance and loveliness of rosemary in every word:—

> "And I'll remember you, Glencairn,
> And a' that you ha'e been to me!"

I think that is what I should like to say to Ugieneuk, blessings on every stone of it, and on every heart that loves it!

The Dean Who Married A Fairy.

The Dean Who Married A Fairy.

I.—The Magic Kipper.

THE Very Reverend Patrick Fitzgerald Gerald O'Hara, Dean of Ballycorthy and Incumbent of Connoloo, was quite an old man—thirty-five at least—when he wakened up to the amazing fact that he had never been in love. Thirty-five is young for a Dean in Ballycorthy, but old for a bachelor in Connoloo, where the girls, as Father Casey once said, have the grace of the angels and the impudence of the "Ould Jintleman" himself. There never was but one man who escaped them, and he went off in a flying-machine! The Dean owed his immunity to his scholarship. He was so steeped in the Ancient Fathers of Alexandria and other heathen parts that he hadn't an eye in his head for the lovely daughters of Connoloo; and I cannot for the life of me tell you why the sight of a kipper on his breakfast table that blessed morning in June suddenly reminded him that there was something very big in the world that he had persistently passed by.

What is there in a bloater that speaks of love? The Dean asked himself that question, and could find no answer, beyond the thought that the life of a dead fish, served for human sustenance, is a pitifully lonely one. His eyes rested meditatively on the kipper; and as he gazed at it wistfully, wonderingly, with a growing sense of puzzlement and annoyance, it changed gradually in colour, shape and smell, and what he saw was a delicate and almost transparent little heart, glowing with warmth and pulsing with expectancy, and the air was filled with the perfume of apple blossoms and hollyhock, of meadow rue and summer roses.

His reverence shrugged his shoulders impatiently, and returned from the land of dreams. "Sure," he said, "you're as full of tricks as Father Casey's mule. You pretend to be a heart, but I bought you for a kipper; and it's eat you I will though you sue me for breach of promise!" Whereupon he finished his meal, and stepped over to the Presbytery.

Now, you maybe don't know Father Casey, and that's a pity, for he is a giant of a man with a fist that could crumple up Carnera at one blow, and there is not a spalpeen in the parish that doesn't shiver at the sight of him. But the old women adore him; and he cannot set foot outside the Presbytery, even for a buryin', but the childer gather round him

like flies round a honey-pot, hugging his great limbs and crying: "Father Casey, Father Casey, darlin', sing us 'The Cow in the Sheugh!'" Big as he is, he has the heart of a child, and believes in all the wonderful and beautiful things, all the happy and mournful things, that Ireland once knew when it learned its songs from the music of the birds and the crooning of many waters. He had a genuine affection for the lonely Dean, which he explained on the ground that though the Dean, by the misfortune of his upbringing, was doubtless a heretic, he was also, by the grace of God, an Irish gentleman; and wasn't the holy Saint Patrick himself an Irish gentleman, with the heart of a hero and the soul of a saint? Of course he was, bad cess to them that denied it!

"Casey," said the Dean—for they were as friendly as that—"Casey, were you ever in love?"

"In love, is it?" cried Father Casey. "I have been in love all my life with three things—a sough, a sigh, and a shimmering; and I'm in sore doubts, O'Hara, that you're only half an Irishman or it would never be needful to tell you what they are. I'm in love with the sough of the winds, the everlasting winds, on these great, level, empty plains; with the sigh from the spirit of Ireland, when it sits down in silence and remembers; and with the shimmering lights of my fathers' Faith. Is that the love you are speaking of this brave June morning, Mr. Dean?"

"It is not," replied the Dean firmly, "and well you know it, Casey. It is a student of patristic theology, and not a poet, I am; and the love I am thinking of this brave June morning is the everyday love of a man for a woman and a woman for a man—like the love of Major Sheenan, I suppose, for that strange young thing at Castle Raths; surely the sweetest creature, Casey, that ever stepped out of Paradise into this desolate wilderness!"

"Arrah!" exclaimed Father Casey. "Now I have ye, as the Blessed Michael said when he got the devil by the tail. That strange young creature, as you call her, is his lordship's niece; and if you want to marry her——"

"But I don't!" gasped the Dean. "Why, I don't even know the lady!"

"That doesn't matter in the least," replied Father Casey. "Many's the man has married a woman and never known her till his dying day. Others have learned, with Solomon, who had some right to speak, that 'he that increaseth knowledge increaseth sorrow.' Now, don't mistake me for an old cynic; but let me tell you, if you really want to know the lady, that a clergyman who goes about munching Hebrew roots and colloging with the Ancient Fathers will never reach the heart of a girl who is on speaking terms with all the fairies and wee folk in Ireland. She will tell you, as simply as if she were telling

you that two and two make four, that the world of imagination is the world of reality. That's the kind of girl Miss Norah Grattan is; and though she is of your own faith—or ought to be, if you hadn't fair sickened the whole Raths family by your everlasting prating about the Ancient Fathers— it's swithering I am if you are the man for her at all—her with her laughter and poetry, and you with your long face and dreary scholastics, and never so much as a gleam of fun in the eye of you! 'Casey, have you ever been in love?' Oh, Dean, Dean, cannot you learn to be a boy again?"

The Dean, deeply offended, rose to go. "Good morning, Father Casey," he said stiffly. "I am sorry to have troubled you on a matter about which, in the nature of things, you must be very imperfectly informed."

There was a mischievous pucker at the corner of Father Casey's eyes as he followed his indignant friend to the door. "Dean," he cried after the retreating figure, "did you ever dance in the moonlight as a cure for too much starch in the system? Leave the Ancient Fathers at home to-night, and have a romp with the fairies. And, by the way," he added, rolling up his sleeves, "I'll deal with Major Sheenan! I owe him a lesson in the rudimentary principles of moral theology!"

Well, now, if I started to analyse the mind of the Dean of Ballycorthy during the day, I should be talking to you all night. He deserted the Ancient Fathers to wrestle with the thought, amounting almost to a certainty, that there was some kind of psychic connection between his breakfast kipper and the glimpse he had caught of Miss Norah Grattan the previous evening—just the tiniest glimpse, you understand, but sufficient to register itself on his subconscious mind, or whatever you call the place where those miracles happen. "The kipper!" he snorted disdainfully, "sure, it wasn't even fresh!"

Ten o'clock found him gazing out of his study window at what Father Casey had called the great, level, empty plains, now flooded with dancing lights; at eleven o'clock, hatless, and still ruminating on the great kipper problem, he was slowly climbing the hill to Raths; and only when the midnight hour sounded from the village clock did he awake to reality—was it reality or a dream?—to find himself leaning against the Great Oak in the Castle grounds, and listening to the most ravishing music that had ever delighted the ear of mortal man. Step by step he moved towards it, with a furtiveness that made him feel uncomfortable; and then, standing in the shadows, he saw a sight that forced him rub his eyes and pinch his elbows and recite the preface to his forthcoming book on Polycarp, to assure himself that

he was really awake and in the full possession of his senses. "Yet," he argued, "if I'm mad, it is certainly a very agreeable form of insanity!"

For what he saw was a fairy revel—a dance in the moonlight to music that seemed to pour down from the Castle walls, and swept the hillside with its wonderful and unearthly harmonies. There was at least a score of fairies, every one of them dressed in green that shone under the moonbeams like stars deep in the sea; and their dance was a stately measure that reminded the Dean curiously of things that were as familiar to him as the nose on his face, but that somehow or other he had forgotten—the smell of the peat-reek, the cry of the birds, the soft lullaby of the waters in the calm of the eventide. Once, as a boy, after a long absence from Ireland, he had heard in the early morning, as his steamer chugged her way lazily down the Antrim coast, the creaking of a cart on the Irish hills, and he had never quite forgotten it; and somehow it came back to him at that moment, "though," he said to himself, "what the creaking of a cart has to do with the loveliest music that was ever heard on this side of Paradise, no man living could tell me! What with fairies and stale kippers and creaking carts and Norah Grattan, it is a nice state I am in for a man who is the Dean of Ballycorthy!"

Then, I am sorry to say, the Dean did an unpardonable thing. He sneezed. It was a proper sneeze, a Gargantuan sneeze; none of your sniffy little sneezes that a child might play with, but a right, good, rousing decanal sneeze, a sneeze that seemed to shake the firmament. "God bless my soul!" cried the Dean; and at the first word of that benediction there was instant silence: the music ceased, the fairies fled. Ah! Not all of them! One held her ground—just a little slip of a thing, but so beautiful that as she stood there with the moonlight streaming over her she seemed to the Dean, who had forgotten all about the Ancient Fathers, to incarnate the very spirit of Ireland, with the magic of its witchery and its wistfulness, and that touch of laughing humour that seems always to be trembling on the verge of tears.

The Dean, being a gentleman, stepped forward, and, being a clergyman he made a speech. "Lady," he said in his most parsonic tones, "I humbly crave your pardon for interrupting a very pleasant evening's entertainment. I will confess that the proceedings have come upon me as a surprise, a delightful surprise, let me add; nevertheless——"

"Oh!" interrupted the fairy. "Now I know! You are the Ancient Father—I mean you are the Dean!"

"I am," acknowledged the Dean, "and you are the kipper—what I mean is, you are the Fairy

Queen; though you will pardon me for remarking," he added loftily, "that until this moment I was unaware that even fairy queens were familiar with the terminology of the ecclesiastical hierarchy."

"Oh, fairies know everything," laughed the Queen. "Will you dance?"

"That I will," declared the Dean, greatly to his own surprise; and dance they did. The queen clapped her hands, the music resumed, and it was music with the wildness of the mountains in it, and the tang of the seas, and the madness of Ireland insurgent against the sorrows of the ages. Never has any Dean since Deans were born danced as the Dean of Ballycorthy danced that night, and he would have been dancing till this moment, I believe, but for an interfering cloud that blotted out the moon. Instantly the music faltered and shivered and died; and with a fluttering of green wings, the Queen fled through the darkness to the mysterious regions where fairies of the Blood Royal hold court among the pixies.

It was a troubled but happy Dean who turned his face homewards that morning. "Sure," said he "she denies she is a kipper, and, of course, she isn't. And she says she is a fairy, and it's ashamed I'd be not to take a lady's word for it. Well, I ate the kipper, but I'll marry the Queen!"

II.—Father Casey Intervenes.

I DON'T need to tell you that the Dean was exalted, as any man would be who had been dancing with a fairy in the moonlight. He seemed to be walking in the splendours of a new world, full of enchanting melodies and gleaming with stars that had deserted the heavens to twinkle all over the place. A nice state of mind for the Dean of Ballycorthy, scholar and recluse! Where were the Ancient Fathers? What had become of the Hebrew roots? And that breakfast kipper, which had miraculously transformed itself into the most delicate and bewitching heart that had ever allured the eye of a middle-aged ecclesiastic—was it love that was the matter with him or merely indigestion? The Dean had reached the ripe age of thirty-five without any knowledge of either of these afflictions; "but, faith," said he to himself, "if this is indigestion I'll try another kipper in the morning! And then," he added, "I'll step over and have a word with Casey!"

I've told you about Father Casey. He had the punch of a giant, the mind of a mystic, and the heart of a child. He and the Dean were close friends, to the scandal of the more rigidly righteous of both churches. "Friends, indeed!" those good people

would say with a sniff. "I'm askin' ye, where's their religion?" I'd better tell you how Father Casey kept his word to deal with Major Sheenan.

The Major, you must know, was son and heir to old Patrick Sheenan of Muckaroom, who had made a mint of money in the Americas—a fortune, some said, of no less than seven hundred pounds; and he came home, like the grand gentleman he was, to end his days in his native village of Connoloo. He did nothing but drink from morning till night; and when he tried to commit suicide by locking his head in a travelling trunk, the general feeling was one of annoyance when it got known that the lock had sprung at the most critical moment of the operation. However, he was found drowned one morning, by the mercy of Providence, in Hallahan's ditch; and young Sheenan, with never a farthing of that vast fortune left to him, went to the wars, and served, first on one side and then on the other, in the numerous armies that were fighting the battle of Irish independence. He gained his majority for heroic conduct in the field by the capture of a brewery in Connemara, which so dispirited the enemy that they instantly surrendered on the understanding that they would be billeted in the brewery, and treated with all the honours of war.

When the Major came back to Connoloo, he proceeded to mark out a pitch for himself at the front right-hand corner of Doolan's bar; and when he

wasn't there, he was swaggering about the village making goose-eyes at the girls, and conducting himself as if religion and morals were dirt beneath his feet. It was like his impudence to be making up to the young lady of Raths; and Father Casey had decided that for Miss Norah Grattan's sake, for the Dean's sake, and for the sake of general decency, the time had come, so to speak, to reduce Major Sheenan to the ranks. So he stepped down to the Square; and there, on the steps of Doolan's public-house, stood Sheenan and the landlord—the one, a tall figure of a man, who carried himself so well that for a moment you didn't notice his dissipated face, which had probably once been rather good-looking, but never strong; the other, a wizened little creature, with ferrety eyes, who had the reputation of being the dirtiest man in the whole parish of Connoloo.

"The top of the marning to your rivirince!" cried Doolan gushingly. "Sure, it's well your rivirince is lookin' these days! It's a proud people we are in Connoloo to have your rivirince's rivirince watching over the religious loif of the counthryside; for I've always said——"

"Doolan," interrupted Father Casey, "your compliments are like your company—they have a disgusting odour of stale potheen. Get you inside, and wash your face, and, if it isn't exhausting you

entirely, give the back of your neck a rub with the scrubbing-brush; and I'll entertain Major Sheenan!"

Doolan sneaked indoors; and Father Casey turned to Sheenan, who was standing with his hands behind his back, his head thrown up, and his chest protruding proudly, for all the world like Ajax defying a brewery!

"Sheenan," said Father Casey softly, "I'm a fair man, I hope, and I'll give you your choice. Would you have me talk to you this morning as man to man or as the priest of this parish?"

Sheenan gave an uneasy little laugh. "Sure, Father Casey," he said, "it is a pleasure always to listen to you, whatever way you speak!"

"It is not, my son," said Father Casey, gentle-like, as if he was speaking to the tenderest chick in his parish. "The saints have blessed me with a wonderful power of persuasion"; and he stretched his great arms as if taking his ease without a thought in his mind but kindness. Sheenan observed the movement, and drew back a step or two nearer to the friendly shelter of Doolan's bar.

"Stand where you are, my son!" commanded Father Casey. "Stand where you are, and answer me quick. Would you prefer to go down on your knees in the Presbytery this morning or fall on your back this very minute in the Square of Connoloo? I'll give you ten seconds to make up your mind!"

"I'll come round to the Presbytery, Father!" said Sheenan promptly—and he did; and that's how Father Casey kept his word to his conscience and his friend. Next morning the Dean rushed in upon him, seething with excitement.

"Casey," he cried, "have you ever danced in the moonlight with a fairy?"

"O'Hara," answered his reverence, "the Ancient Fathers are driving you mad. Yesterday morning it was, 'Casey, have you ever been in love?' To-day it is, 'Casey, have you ever danced in the moonlight with a fairy?' You're a Protestant clergyman, and I'm a Catholic priest; but, on my soul, O'Hara, I'm sore tempted to report you to your bishop!"

"Come, come, Casey!" pleaded the Dean. "You know that I had a kipper yesterday for breakfast, and it turned into a heart—I mean before I ate it; and at Raths Castle last night I saw it dancing in the moonlight, and it was the loveliest kipper—I mean it was the loveliest fairy that ever was kippered—no, no; not that! What I mean is——"

"What you mean," interjected Father Casey pitying, "is that you are in the same state of mental disorder as Pat Collighan, who keeps an eating-house over in Billy, when he asked Kitty Cregan to marry him. 'Kitty,' said he, 'I'm an ating-house keeper. Will you come and be my little ham-sandwich?' I'll

read this dream that you've been dreaming, O'Hara, and I pray the saints that it doesn't turn out to be a nightmare. You caught just a glimpse of Norah Grattan the day before yesterday—just a glimpse, I say, but it was enough to turn the head of a man who had imagined that there was nothing more beautiful on earth than the ghost of an Ancient Father. You thought of her, and thought of her, and thought of her, and didn't know it any more than you know that—barring myself, of course—you are the handsomest figure of a man in Connoloo. When you sat down to breakfast yesterday morning, your mind was torn between a sense of duty to the Ancient Fathers and a feeling of newness that had come into your life; and when the kipper became a heart, it was a miracle of mercy specially performed, to show you the true way of existence for a Protestant clergyman who is also an Irish gentleman. That's that, O'Hara; and last night when you saw the fairy at Castle Raths, your mind was on fire with a vision you had hardly seen, and if old Widow O'Grady, with her wooden leg, had been dancing in the moonlight, you'd have sworn she was Norah Grattan; and then Heaven knows what would have happened. I'd hate to think of you getting married to Widow O'Grady! Anyway, that's how it is with you, Mr. Dean. You're in love, head over heels in love; and take shame to yourself that you should come to a sworn celibate to

read you a riddle that any chit of a girl in Connoloo could interpret without waiting to draw breath!"

During this long speech the Dean stood open-mouthed, gazing in mingled wonder and admiration at his friend. "But, Casey," he said, "was that really a fairy I danced with last night? She seemed —er—if I may say so, too plump and substantial to be a fairy?"

"And what do you know about fairies?" asked Father Casey indignantly. "You that's spent your whole mortal life colloging with the Ancient Fathers? And why shouldn't a fairy be plump and substantial? There are all kinds of fairies, I'd have you know—plump and scraggy, tall and stumpy, merry and sorrowful, good and bad."

"Then you actually and truly believe in fairies?" exclaimed the Dean.

"I've towld ye already I belaive in them," said Father Casey, passing in his excitement into the homely speech of his people. "It's the fairies, it is, that have kept the heart of Ireland from breaking in two. They've filled this sad counthry with the loveliness of a dream that is always coming true, and with the mystery of a world where two and two don't make four, and where one idea is worth a thousand facts. That's the secret of your country's sorrows and its gladness, O'Hara; it weeps by the graveside of dead memories, and is happy in the haunting sense

that all around it is a world of grace, full of mysteries and witcheries and the beauty of God. And the good fairies, Mr. Dean, are its ambassadors!"

"But, man alive," exclaimed the Dean, "I cannot marry a fairy!"

Father Casey smiled humorously. "You never know what you can do till you try," said he; "and this very night you and I will keep watch and ward—the two of us together—in the grounds at Castle Raths."

"What! You will come?" cried the Dean delightedly. You're a brick, Casey, and I'll always——"

"Softly, softly, O'Hara," interrupted Father Casey. "The last man I gave a lift to on the road to mathrimony has niver forgiven me! At anyrate, Sheenan is out of the way, Norah Grattan is a girl in a thousand, and you, Mr. Dean, though an incorrigible heretic, are my friend. Now off with you; I am busy —till to-night!"

III.—"The Consequences Were"—

A FEW minutes before the stroke of midnight Father Casey and his friend were standing on the identical spot where, twenty-four hours before, the Dean's ears had been ravished with unearthly music; and as he waited impatiently for its recurrence, his heart went pit-a-pat like a school-girl's when she meets her father for the first time after having had her hair bobbed contrary to his express commands.

"Casey," he whispered, "do you really think she'll come?"

"Of course she'll come," answered Father Casey confidently. "It's a full moon, and there is a rustling in the trees that would make your heart sing if there was a drop of real Irish blood in your veins, O'Hara. She'll come as every woman in the world would come—to the spot where there is a poor, deluded, love-sick man waiting for her; and it's done for ye are as sure as your name's O'Hara unless you go home this instant to your could kippers and the Ancient Fathers."

"But, Casey," persisted the Dean, "it's a fairy I am speaking of, and a fairy's not a woman."

"I've tould you already," retorted Father Casey, "that you know nothing whatever about the fairies of Ireland. And it's not honest you are. For though you talk about the fairy it's a kipper you are thinking of—the kipper and the heart on the cracked plate that Biddy O'Hallan clapped down on your breakfast table, and Norah Grattan, and the strange crayture you danced with in the moonlight; it's a woman, I tell you, that keeps running through it all. Whist now!"

There was a sound as of a hundred tiny feet scampering down a gossamer stair—just that; merely the shadow of a sound, if you understand: a flicker, like angels' feathers falling on a bed of down. Then high up, above the tree-tops, among the stars, a great chord of music: silence: and a burst of melody that seemed to sweep the skies. Father Casey's eyes were gleaming; the Dean, for a man in love, seemed badly shaken. Step by step they moved softly forward, and presently they stood in the shadows in full view of a spectacle no less wonderful than the scene which four-and-twenty hours ago had converted a respectable Dean of the Church of Ireland into the dancing partner of a fairy queen. What Father Casey was thinking at that moment I cannot tell you. The gleam of seraphic happiness had gone from his eyes, and in its stead there was a mischievous twinkle that hinted

at a source of merriment which was hidden from his friend.

The Dean, hat in hand, was gazing at the picture with the rapture of a devotee. How they danced, those fairies! It was the rhythm of Paradise to the Dean. And the fairy queen—ah, it would need a lover with immortal youth in the heart of him to tell you worthily of the exquisite joy that thrilled him him through and through as he watched that dainty figure, robed in the green of the sea, move hither and thither like a glad spirit from another world coming to earth with the romance of the spheres and the gaiety of Heaven in every glance of her eye, every movement of her graceful body. The Dean felt his backbone shiver, which I am told is an infallible sign of love. He recollected in a sub-conscious way some lines he had vastly admired in his undergraduate days at old Trinity—by Suckling, weren't they? he asked himself—

> "Her feet beneath her petticoat,
> Like little mice, stole in and out,
> As if they feared the light;
> But, oh, she dances such a way
> No sun upon an Easter day
> Is half so fine a sight!"

"Isn't she beautiful, beautiful!" he murmured to Father Casey.

"'Im!" said Father Casey. "Middlin', O'Hara, middlin'!"

"You're getting on in years, Casey," his friend retorted with unusual tartness. "Your eyes are failing you. I say there never was such a woman since the world began!"

"Fairy, you mean, fairy!" expostulated Father Casey in muffled tones; and he was shaking like a man stricken with the palsy.

"Fairy, be——" began the Dean, but he never finished what, I fear, was going to be a somewhat naughty, if not indeed altogether wicked, remark. For the little impish gods who impertinently play divinity on such high occasions were abroad that night. Twenty-four hours before, the Dean, at a critical moment in the proceedings, had sneezed. I am sorry to tell you that he now repeated the performance. In the case of a less simple-minded man—a man of the world, for example—I should have no hesitation in saying that he did it of set purpose. But the Dean of Ballycorthy was too fine a character to stoop to such expedients; he was as innocent as a girl of twenty in matters of the heart. It was an honest sneeze, an impromptu sneeze; and if you have ever heard a Dean sneeze you will understand me when I say that it was no ordinary sneeze. There are all kinds of sneezes, I may mention for your information, in the ecclesiastical hierarchy—the sneeze prelatical, which reverberates like a royal salute; the sneeze decanal, which is impressive without being

awe-inspiring; the sneeze rectorial, which is a kind of indignant sniff; and the mere curate sneeze, which is hardly worth classifying. The Dean's sneeze, therefore, was a notable achievement.

What happened on the previous evening, happened again. The music ceased, the fairies fled—all but the lady in green.

"Good evening, Mr. Dean," she cried, waving her hand to the shadows. "I recognise you by your voice."

"Pardon me," said the Dean, stepping forward, "but that was not my natural voice. It was—ah—er—a sneeze!"

"Splendid!" exclaimed the fairy queen, "you sneeze better than any other Dean in Ireland. Will you dance?"

"Delighted!" replied the Dean, "but first I must introduce my friend, if I may. Hi, Casey!" And Father Casey came forth from shadowland, wiping his eyes as if he had been sobbing violently. "Father Casey," continued the Dean proudly; "the Fairy Queen!" And then, still more proudly: "This is the happiest moment in my life. I never imagined that I should have the happiness of enabling Father Casey to confirm at first-hand his remarkable theories on fairy-life in Ireland; and I owe it to him, your Majesty, to my dear friend Father Casey, that I have been permitted——"

"Oh, Dean, Dean," wept Father Casey, "you'll be the death of me if you don't hould your peace. Let me have a turn at the introducing. Miss Norah Grattan, you're as full of mischief as an egg's full of mate. These midnight capers have entirely demoralised a life that has hitherto been devoted to the Ancient Fathers, and you'll have them on your conscience, as well as a could on your chist, if you don't act like a sinsible young woman and mend your wild Irish ways. Mr Dean, I'm for home. You'll have something to say, I'm thinking, to the young lady of Raths!"

And he turned on his heel and walked away. "Father Casey," cried Norah as his tall figure passed into the shadow of the trees, "I'll take your advice—and act like a sensible woman."

Well, she did, for she married the Dean, and they lived happily ever after.

And thus ended the Strange Adventures of the Dean of Ballycorthy and incumbent of Connoloo. He abandoned the Ancient Fathers as the staple article of pulpit dietary, and I have reason to believe he has never regretted it; for as he looks round his large and still growing family circle, with the Queen on her Throne and all her youthful subjects doing her reverence, he sighs contentedly at the thought that he is now something of an ancient father himself.

. . . . . .

In the wonderful hour before the gloaming—an hour full of witcheries that man has never been able to explain—Father Casey stands at the Presbytery window, gazing wistfully across the road towards the Rectory garden. The sound of children's voices reach his ear, happy voices that seem somehow to be part of the silence, the rhythm of its spirit. Father Casey shakes his old head in puzzlement, and there is a twinkle in his eyes and a tear. "So near," he murmurs, "and yet so far! Heretics they are—and the childer of God. Imps of mischief—and blessed angels. O Mary, brave Mother, it is a beautiful garden, and there is a pond in the heart of it where the stately lilies stand—like saintly vestals, pale in prayer; and they call it 'Mary's Pool.' Won't you just slip 'across the road' this lovely evening, and leave a blessing with my friends?"

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